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Rethinking Media and Social Space

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Editorial

Media Studies for a Mediatized World: Rethinking Media and Social Space

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Abstract
This editorial introduces a thematic issue on "Rethinking Media and Social Space". By critically rethinking the relationship between media and social space this issue takes initial steps towards ensuring that media studies is appropriate for a mediatized world. Contemporary societies are permeated by media that play important roles in how people maneuver and position themselves in the social world. Yet, analyses of media-related social change too often fail to engage with the complex and situated nature of power relations. This editorial highlights three enduring problems: (1) the annihilation of the socially structured and structuring role of media technologies and practices; (2) the conflation of inherent social capacities of media technologies and discourses with existing mediations of power, and (3) the reduction of social space to one predominant dimension which overshadows all other forms of social power that media technologies, discourses, and practices are part of. As a response to these problems—and in bringing together the arguments of the five articles included in the thematic issue—this editorial calls for sociologized approaches to media technologies, discourses, and practices.

Keywords
mediatization; media discourse; media practice; media sociology; media technology; power; social space

Issue
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1. Introduction

There are several ways to study the relations between media and social space. Examples include Bourdieusian studies of the dispersion of media repertoires in a class structure; Lefebvrian analyses of the significance of media for the social production of spaces and places, and their symbolic-material textures; social constructivist interpretations of mediation as a form of world making (following Berger and Luckmann), and mediatization as a form of social structuration (in the Giddensian sense). Although attuned differently, these views converge in that they address the role of media in social reproduction and change. They tease out the relations between single instances of social and/or discursive practice and overarching power structures in society. Such relations occur in complex ways and on different levels. First, there are a growing number of *techno-social machineries* that in various, increasingly automated ways premediate (Grusin, 2010) the cultural preferences and social practices of different groups. Second, they unfold through *discursive constructions* of social and spatial relations. Third, they are established through the classified and classifying *media practices* of different social groups. In times of connective and locative media (Van Dijck, 2013; Wilken & Goggin, 2015), and what we may ultimately describe as an algorithmic culture (Striphas, 2015), these levels become increasingly interdependent making social power relations at once more fluid as well as technologically dependent. This implies that media and social space become even more closely interwoven than before.

Still, it is our contention that the term social space *per se* has not been sufficiently problematized and theorized in media and communication studies. There is a tendency either to overlook questions of how social power

is mediated (often stemming from a lack of contextualization) or to treat social space reductively. This is particularly problematic in times when *media change* is assumed to have an almost revolutionary impact on society and culture. Against this backdrop, this thematic issue of *Media and Communication* brings together prominent scholars to shed light on the relationships between media and social space—both theoretically and empirically. The articles assess the relevance of various conceptual frameworks and explore the changing modes of social reproduction and change that characterize our technologically mediated culture and society. In this introduction, we will initially discuss why there is a growing need for media scholars to problematize social space before going on to introduce and collate the key arguments of the five articles within this thematic issue.

2. Three Reasons to Rethink Media and Social Space

Since we conceive of power as something relational it is also an inherently mediated matter. As Williams (1976) discusses in his *Keywords*, modern thought has conceived of mediation predominantly as an intermediary form of action to "bring about reconciliation or agreement" between different parties (p. 206). But it is also, and *at the same time*, a process that actualizes and makes visible relations of domination, *and* carries the ideologies that legitimate such relations. As such, power cannot exist without mediation. This manifests in concrete situations of communicative exchange, where the discursive construction of speech acts excludes and includes different interlocutors. We can also see it on the societal level, where culture operates as a "mediation of society" (Williams, 1977, p. 99), meaning that power relations are not external to culture but are an integral and continuously molded part of it. However, as Williams also argues, there is a risk that mediation—understood as the "intermediary"—invokes the separation of categories that are not easy to distinguish, such as reality vs. representation and base vs. superstructure. Hence, while we should take the fundamental role of mediation for the (re)production of social power relations seriously, we should be cautious not to reproduce simplified views of how these processes occur, for instance in terms of linear media effects or ideological manipulation.

While the above point may seem quite old, converging with classical debates that have been covered in textbooks such as McQuail's (2010) *Mass Communication Theory*, we argue that media and communication studies still too often operate with ontological and epistemological frameworks that fail to grasp the complex ways in which media—understood as technologies of mediation—emerge through and play into social power relations. This is a particularly critical issue today, given that media and communication technologies hold an increasingly ubiquitous presence in people's everyday lives, *mediatizing* as well as *mediating* all kinds of social relations (see, e.g., Couldry & Hepp, 2016).

With this thematic issue, we seek to address three enduring problems that we have detected in current media research, especially related to the impact of new media technologies and forms.[1] The first problem concerns the *annihilation of the socially structured and structuring role of media technologies and practices*. In contemporary discussions on how media change society and culture, there is a tendency to generalize new developments across social space without problematizing whether and how they are premised on certain power geometries. While the problems of stratification (in the "vertical" sense of social space) and differentiation (in the "horizontal" sense) have been acknowledged, for example, in mediatization theory (e.g., Ekström, Fornäs, Jansson, & Jerslev, 2016), theoretical concepts are all too often introduced and implemented without assessment of their applicability to different social settings and social groups. Such uncritical reiterations of theoretical axioms tend to conceal how mediation (re)produces power relations.

The second problem concerns the *conflation of inherent social capacities of media technologies and discourses with existing mediations of power*. This problem implies that the power of mediation is exaggerated rather than annihilated. It is particularly obvious in critical accounts of how new media technologies affect structures of domination on a larger scale, such as the pervasive commoditizing impact of social media on society and culture, as well as in discourse analytical approaches to how certain new media formats may influence relations between societies and cultures on a larger scale. These types of studies are often based on sophisticated approaches to technological and/or textual affordances or logics but fail to validate their claims in relation to the actual social conditions of media use.

The third problem concerns the *reduction of social space to one predominant dimension that overshadows all other forms of social power that media technologies, discourses, and practices are part of*. This problem can be detected above all in media studies pertaining to particular cultural communities or identities, for example in terms of gender, sexuality, ethnicity, or class. While there is a rich body of research providing in-depth analyses of how media sustain or interrupt power relations based on people's positionalities in social space there is also a risk that the focus on one particular group or community obscures other power dimensions which may also be at work. The solution to this problem would be a stronger engagement with intersectionality, for instance in the spirit of Skeggs' (1997) work on gender and working-class culture, and the multidimensional nature of social space proposed by Bourdieu who, contrary to popular belief, was sensitive to how social and geographical space overlap and intermingle (2000, p. 134).

[1] Since there is not enough space in this editorial to formulate a more elaborate critique of particular works (and thus treat them in a fair and justified manner) we have refrained from including any references to studies that would be representative of the problems we mention.

In sum, these problems point to an overarching need to *sociologize* (certain strands of) media studies. While it would be naive to expect that *all* studies should pay equal attention to *all* these issues, we claim that sociological sensitivity is especially important in analyses that deal with media related change. In the following section, we discuss how this endeavor is handled in the five articles presented in this thematic issue.

3. How to Sociologize Media Technologies, Discourses, and Practices

The five articles included in this thematic issue all address the concerns outlined above. They come together in a joint effort to sociologize media—as either technologies, discourses or the practices connected to them—and thus to grasp the social power relations associated with media related change.

Abeele, De Wolf and Ling (2018) start off the issue by theorizing mobile media and social space. Drawing on Giddens' structuration theory they provide an exposé on the role of mobile media in everyday life. The Giddensian view allows Abeele et al. (2018) and her colleagues to unravel key micro and macro dynamics that reshape social life in our digitized and mediatized world. Their argument is that the present media landscape, the norms and practices connected to it, incurs a heavy burden for the individual media user—who has to manage and control their communication, and be aware of the consequences of their actions in a networked and surveilled everyday life.

Fast (2018), in turn, shifts our attention to corporate technology discourse and how the transnational information and communication technology (ICT) companies Ericsson, IBM and Huawei construct the notion of media indispensability in their external communication. Despite the social costs and the power dynamics that come with the mediatized and mobile society, the discursive trope of media indispensability is mobilized on the part of ICT companies as the key to the "good life". Fast's contribution provides not just a timely call for a "discursive turn" in mediatization studies but also invites readers to question the prevailing discourse of all-encompassing connectivity and how it represents and annihilates certain groups and places in society.

Chan and Humphreys (2018) provide an empirical account of how Californian Uber drivers manoeuver and make sense of their quantified and surveilled ways of making a living in the "gig economy". They provide an account of how media re-negotiate social space at the micro level, in the everyday lives of people in particularly mediatized and sometimes precarious lines of work. Uber drivers, Chan and Humphreys (2018) argue, have developed a "distinct algorithmic imaginary" which shapes their practices and thus the production of social space. The article thus contributes to a more detailed and practice-oriented understanding of the increasingly pervasive datafication of social space.

We have argued that much media and communication research provides sweeping descriptions of how mobile and digital media have fundamentally altered social life, and thus tends to overlook how people make sense of media in everyday life, and how media practices unfold therein. Bengtsson's article is, therefore, an important contribution. Her focus is on the "mundane negotiations and practices "related to the "good life" with media. In using qualitative interviews and a sociophenomenological approach Bengtsson (2018) has been able to unveil the relations between the "ethics of the ordinary" and sensorial experiences related to the media. The study illustrates the concrete ways in which media are used to organize social space and how they are positioned in relation to the course of daily life.

Finally, Hartley (2018) mobilizes the Bourdieusian view of social space—a space of class relations wherein agents endowed with different ways of relating to the social world (*habitus*) form distinct lifestyles and media repertoires. In her interview study with young Danes Hartley (2018) shows how the possession or dispossession of cultural capital shapes people's relation to news and journalism. Her article adds to the body of Bourdieusian studies of the Scandinavian societies which converge in that they illustrate the explanatory power of the notion of social space for understanding and explaining media practice—even in so-called "egalitarian" countries.

Taken together, the five articles take important steps towards a media studies that is more sensitive to the ways in which media become a part of social power geometries. Social space, we argue, is a particularly fruitful concept for such studies, especially in times marked by strong popular and academic belief in media as *the* driver of social change. It concerns how media technologies and their logics shape the ways people think about and position themselves in social space; how discourses about media change contribute to the normalization of certain ideologies of social development (and the agents of such development), and how media are embedded in place and space through classified and classifying forms of everyday practice. A media studies that can properly come to terms with, and understand our mediatized world—a networked, datafied, digitized, surveilled, and not least a fundamentally unequal world—should critically rethink the relationship between media and social space. This thematic issue takes one step in that direction.

Conflict of Interests

The authors declare no conflict of interests.

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Article

Mobile Media and Social Space: How Anytime, Anyplace Connectivity Structures Everyday Life

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Abstract
Using Giddens' (1984) structuration theory we examine how social structures in mobile communication technologies shape the everyday life of individuals, thereby re-shaping power dynamics that underlie the social organization of society. We argue that the anytime, anyplace connectivity afforded by mobile communication technologies structures society by imposing a network, social and personal logic. We discuss how each logic both reproduces and challenges traditional power structures, at the micro- as well as macro-level. At the micro-level, the network logic refers to mobile communication technologies' capacity to organize activities in a networked fashion, granting people greater autonomy from time and place. The social logic refers to mobile communication technologies' capacity for perpetual contact, fostering social connectedness with social relationships. The personal logic refers to mobile communication technologies' capacity to serve as extensions of the Self, with which people can personalize contents, services, place and time. The flipside of these logics is that, at the micro-level, the responsibility to operate autonomously, to maintain personal social networks, and to manage and act based on personal information shifts to the individual. We also notice shifts in power structures at the macro-level. For instance, to reap the benefits of mobile communication technology individuals engage in free 'digital labor' and tolerate new forms of surveillance and control.

Keywords
Giddens; logics; mobile media; power; responsibilization; social structure

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1. Introduction

Over the past decade, ubiquitous connectivity has become ingrained in everyday life. We use mobile communication technologies such as smartphones, tablets and laptops to interact with others, with services and with our device wherever we are and whenever we want. As Deuze (2011) argues, we reach a situation where we live "in" rather than "with" media, as these can no longer be seen as separate from us and become invisible because they are everywhere. This appears particularly true of mobile communication technologies, as we take their anytime, anyplace connectivity for granted (Ling, 2012). The taken-for-grantedness of mobile technologies is unfortunate, as it makes us overlook their role in shaping new power structures. Kubitschko and Knapp (2012, p. 362) mention in that regard that Deuze's media life ontology misses "any sense of materialization in relation to the mediatization of the social". Mobile communication technologies shape both offline and online social action.

Thus, if anything, we need to recognize how the use of mobile communication technologies underpins contemporary life.

If we wish to understand how mobile communication technologies shape everyday life and the power dynamics that underlie it, we must focus on the social structures (cf. DeSanctis & Poole, 1994) in these technologies. Social structures are the patterned ways in which everyday life is socially organized (Wellman & Berkowitz, 1988). They enable and constrain human action by prescribing a way of 'doing things', and are reproduced every time people 'follow the prescription'. Because structures depend on human action, however, humans may also reflect upon, challenge, alter and resist them (Giddens, 1984). When the latter is done collectively, social change (i.e., re-structuring) may take place.

This interplay between structure and individual agency, also known as "duality of structure" (Giddens, 1984), can also be found in the relationship between technology and human agency (cf. Orlikowski's, 1992, duality of technology). Adaptive structuration theory (DeSanctis & Poole, 1994) argues that there are social structures inherent in technologies. These social structures can be understood as *templates*, as "rules and resources provided by technologies…as the basis for human activity" (p. 125). Technologies structure human behavior because their affordances enable and constrain human action while, simultaneously, human agents structure the technology by designing, producing and marketing it, appropriating it (or not), and embedding it into everyday life (Hutchby, 2001).

The aim of this theoretical article is to unravel how the technological structuration process takes shape on the ground in the context of mobile communication technologies. To that end, we first argue that the concept of a 'logic' lends itself well to explain at least three dominant social structures in mobile communication technologies. Second, for each logic, we examine the micro-level implications of technological structuration processes in everyday life by zooming in on the ways in which processes and routines in everyday are altered. Finally, in a third section we discuss the flipside of these logics, both at the micro- and macro-level. At the micro-level, we examine subtle ways in which power is re-negotiated at the micro-level. At the macro-level, we examine how the technological structuration process interacts with general structuration processes, thereby reproducing and reshaping institutional power dynamics. Overall, our conceptual analysis serves as a lens that helps understand, structure, describe and discuss the implications of anyplace, anytime connectivity.

2. Social Structures in Mobile Communication Technologies: Network, Social and Personal Logic

Social structures are prescriptive: they specify a way of "doing things" (Giddens, 1984). Because of their prescriptive nature, structuration can be described as a process of installing a *logic* in society. A logic is a set of principles that makes it *logical* to organize things repeatedly and systematically in a certain manner. For example, when we consider gender as a social structure, we understand the gender structuration process as one of installing and maintaining a set of principles that make it logical to confer advantages and disadvantages systematically and repeatedly to people based on their gender. The logic of a system needs a rather continual set of events that underscore or illuminate the existence of the legitimized "way of doing things".

Similar to how a social category such as gender represents a social structure, we can find social structure in technologies. These structures reflexively shape society at the micro-level by changing processes and routines in everyday life, and at the macro-level by supporting social change and thus an altering of the institutional order. This symbolic interactionist view on the interplay between media technologies and society has been captured in the 'media logic' concept (cf. Altheide, 2013; Altheide & Snow, 1985). This concept has been successfully applied to understand the social implications of, for example, social media (Van Dijck & Poell, 2013) and digital news (Dahlgren, 1996).

In the current article, we apply the concept onto mobile communication technologies, by looking at the logics in mobile communication technology that direct human behavior—not deterministically, but rather by providing humans with both a "rationality of means" (Katz & Aakhus, 2002, p. 306) and "constraint upon possibilities" (p. 307). We argue that by enabling people to be "Permanently Online, Permanently Connected" (POPC; cf. Vorderer, Krömer, & Schneider, 2016) the dominant affordance of mobile communication technology is anytime, anyplace connectivity. This anytime anyplace connectivity alters both our daily routines and institutional forms. To understand the way in which daily routines and institutional forms are changing, we can analyze the logics underlying these processes of change. We differentiate three logics: a social-, a network- and a personal logic. Given the convergence of different services and platforms into one smartphone device, these three logics are undoubtedly not the only logics present in contemporary mobile communication technologies. We posit, however, that these three logics explain the dominant ways in which mobile communication technologies have shaped everyday life, thereby offering new opportunities, but also challenges at both the micro- and macro-level.

3. Social Logic

For Giddens (1990), the invention of the mechanical clock "emptied" time by introducing a universal system that separates space from time and standardizes time across regions. The latter ensures processes of 'disembedding', which he describes as processes that "'lift out' social activity from localized contexts, recognizing social relations across large time-space distances" (p. 53). Mo-

bile communication technologies amplify this lifting out of social activities from their localized contexts. This is particularly noticeable in the social domain, where these technologies made it commonsensical for people to disembed their social life from time and space by organizing it in a 'connected' manner (Chayko, 2012; Licoppe & Heurtin, 2001).

Katz and Aakhus (2002) mention a logic of "perpetual contact" as a driving force of people's use, judgment and interpretation of mobile communication technologies. This logic is a "socio-logic", based on a shared understanding of the interactional affordances of mobile phone technology that spreads through people's interactions with one another. The notion of a socio-logic resonates with Simmel's (1950) sociation and Bourdieu's (2005) habitus concept. As Katz and Aakhus (2002) argue, the logic of perpetual contact is rooted in a fundamental human desire for "pure communication" (Peters, 1999, as cited in Katz & Aakhus, 2002), a communication unhindered by any form of constraint, be this time, space or even our bodies ("like the talk of angels") (Katz & Aakhus, 2002, p. 307). Indeed, what characterizes humanity is our fundamental need to belong. According to Baumeister and Leary (1995), this need can be fulfilled when (1) a person has frequent and positively valenced interpersonal interactions, that (2) take place in the context of interpersonal relationships characterized by stability and affective concern. In short, people need a certain quantity of qualitative interactions with persons they have a durable interpersonal relationship with.

During modernity, however, industrialization and associated developments in urbanization and modern transportation have led to more dispersed social networks, or 'psychological' rather than geographical neighborhoods (Ling, 2017; Wurtzel & Turner, 1976). Moreover, processes of de-traditionalization and individuation led to greater individual autonomy in the choice of one's personal relationships (Giddens, 1984, 1991, 1993). Giddens (1993) speaks in this regard of the 'pure' relationship: a relationship not prescribed by tradition but whose virtue is solely to fulfill partners' need to belong.

Over the past three decades, processes of industrialization and urbanization continued, at an even faster pace and in a more globalized fashion (Castells, 2009), leading Rosa (2013) to observe that the dominant feature of contemporary society is acceleration. In people's everyday lives, acceleration manifests itself in the experience of life as fast-paced, as if one is constantly balancing on a slippery slope. People indeed report feeling harried and under time pressure in everyday life (e.g., Mattingly & Sayer, 2006). In such a society, maintaining frequent interactions in the context of stable and affectively caring 'pure' relationships becomes challenging—a challenge that lies on the shoulders of the individual. Mobile communication, and particularly text-based communication provides an answer to this challenge.

With respect to the frequency of communication, the interactional affordances of mobile messengers and mobile social media enable people to be in perpetual contact (Ling & Lai, 2016). People have short, yet frequent, mobile interactions with their significant social relationships that seamlessly weave together into day- or even week-long conversations, contributing to a state of "connected presence" (Licoppe, 2004) in which others may be physically absent, but virtually present. The oftentimes phatic (cf. Malinowski, 1972) nature of these interactions plays into the maintenance of social relationships. Seemingly superficial interactions, such as the 'ephemeral' exchanges on Snapchat (a social media application where messages disappear after a predefined amount of time), carry a significant symbolic load, as they testify that people think about each other during their mundane activities, and take time and effort to inform each other of that. People also use mobiles for ritualized communication, including 'social-exchange' rituals in which complex norms regulate reciprocity and govern how trust is negotiated (Ling, 2008b; Taylor & Harper, 2003). In short, the social logic in mobile communication technologies fosters social connectedness in a society in which relationship maintenance has become more challenging.

4. The Network Logic

The network logic refers to the fact that the social structures inherent in mobile communication technologies have made it logical for people to organize their activities in a 'networked' manner (Castells, Fernandez-Ardevol, Qiu, & Sey, 2009; Rainie & Wellman, 2012). Indeed, in contemporary Western societies, people are accustomed to directly access persons, services and information irrespective of time and place. For example, we check our work email during a restroom break, and progressively determine when and where to meet with friends.

The network logic inherent in digitally mediated mobile communication has restructured the social organization of society by no longer defining social relationships and activities in terms of the place where and the time when they take place. Giddens (1991) refers to this as "time-space distanciation". With respect to place, we see that social relationships and activities are increasingly defined by the "space of flows" (Castells et al., 2009), i.e., the communication and information that flows between the nodes who are in these places. For example, communication and information exchange between a teacher and their students can run from places such as the teacher's personal home, the office, or the train into students' homes, workplaces or favorite bar. The teacher-student relationship and the associated social activities are thus defined not by place (i.e., the auditorium or the office) but by the interaction and the communication channel. As a result, the space of flows disentangles a person's social role—the set of behaviors, beliefs, norms, obligations that come with a social position—from his/her location.

Mobile technologies have contributed not only to disentangling the relationship between social activity and

place but also of the relationship between social activity and time. Social activities were traditionally organized in terms of sequentially ordered clock time, with one activity apportioned to each time slot. While clock time remains essential for the operation of major social institutions, we see that mobile communication enables people to organize activities in a much more flexible manner, for instance by allowing them to 'compress time' by carrying out multiple activities concurrently (Castells et al., 2009; Green, 2002). The de-sequencing of time that mobile devices enable, contributes to a continuous temporal and simultaneously spatial "boundary rearrangement" in everyday life (Green, 2002); people use mobile devices both to arrange when and where activities start and end, and to start and end them in the moment itself. The continuous rearrangement of social activities afforded by mobile interaction makes events more simultaneous, instantaneous and perhaps disjointed. A consequence is that people are only certain about what occurs in the present and the immediate future, i.e., in the "present extensive" (Marcía-Montes, Caballero-Muñoz, & Pérez-Álvarez, 2006). For example, when a CEO receives an urgent mobile call from work (e.g. a worker not showing up for his/her shift) during a family pick nick, she may need to rearrange the work situation on the spot, for example by instantly rearranging the social activities of other employees to cover for the tardy worker.

By removing space and time constraints, the network logic inherent in mobile communication technologies affords people greater autonomy over their personal life as it provides them with the opportunity to tap "into the[ir] sparsely knit networks of diverse associates rather than rely on tight connections to a relatively small number of core associates" (Rainie & Wellman, 2012, p. 12). People rely less on time and space as an intermediary to organize daily activities (Ling, 2004). The primary example of this autonomy is how we use mobile communication technologies to "micro-coordinate" the logistics of everyday life (Ling & Haddon, 2003; Ling & Yttri, 1999). Activities can be adjusted mid-course, and their coordination can be progressively refined, so as to best accommodate each individual's personal schedule. Mobile access to other people, but also mobile access to information and services (e.g., on delays in public transportation) enables people to flexibly align themselves to ad hoc situations (Bertel, 2013).

5. The Personal Logic

The personal logic refers to the observation that the social structures inherent in contemporary mobile communication technologies embody processes of personalization (Campbell & Park, 2008). By enabling anytime, anyplace connectivity, mobile communication technologies enable people to personalize time and space: Public space is personalized, as people can disengage from any physical setting by drawing up symbolic fences using their mobile communication technology, even if that means breaking social arrangements (e.g., when voice calling during a theatre performance; Ling, 2008a). Time is also personalized when, for example, people use mobile communication technologies to instantly renegotiate their schedules depending on personal preferences and circumstances (Ling & Haddon, 2003). Because of time-space distanciation (Giddens, 1991), mobile communication technologies also enable people to develop, manage and access highly personal networks (Campbell & Park, 2008). This aspect of personalization is perhaps most visible in the lives of young teenagers, for whom the device enables 'personal' communication with friends, 'under-the-radar' of parents or other authority figures (Ling & Yttri, 1999; Vanden Abeele, 2016).

With the advent of mobile, internet, and smartphone technology, personalization as a logic has become even more pervasive. In contemporary societies, people have access to contents and services on their mobile communication technologies tailored to their preferences based on personalization recommendation systems (e.g., Netflix, Spotify, news items to which they are exposed, etc.), and they increasingly consume these contents and services on demand. The trend towards personalized, on-demand consumption has disrupted entire industries, but also significantly re-structured everyday practices, offering new opportunities (e.g., decreasing advertising clutter) as well as challenges (e.g., binge viewing).

Finally, a mobile device itself is a personal and also potentially personalized object (decorated with covers) (e.g., Katz & Sugiyama, 2016). The materiality of the device itself is symbolic: like with other possessions (cf. Belk, 1988), we can come to consider it an extension of the self (Vishwanath & Chen, 2008) reflecting our personal and social identities. Wearable technologies embody the personal logic even further, by allowing persons to track a variety of personal parameters (e.g., health indicators) and to reflect on their meaning. This information may subsequently lead to better decision-making (Morris & Aguilera, 2012). Finally, the 'personalness' also lies in the digital traces that we leave behind when using our mobile devices. These document our personal lives (cf. Hand, 2016), and enable others to reminisce us even after our death (Cumiskey & Hjorth, 2017).

6. The Flipside of the Social Structures of Mobile Communication Technologies

In the previous sections, we used the lens of 'technological logics' to explain how the social structures inherent in mobile communication devices re-structure everyday life. We deduct from that analysis that the social-, network- and personal logic provide ample benefits to the processes and routines that make out people's everyday lives. However, there is a flipside to the social structures in mobile media, both at the micro- and the macro-level.

7. Consequences of Anytime, Anyplace Connectivity for the Individual: Responsibilization

In describing the dominant dynamics of modernity, Giddens (1990) refers to reflexivity as a defining characteristic of human action. People have to 'keep in touch' with the grounds of what they are doing. The construction of the self becomes a reflexive project, as individuals find their identity "amid the strategies and options provided by abstract systems" (p. 124). Giddens defined this new life style as "life politics" (1991, p. 209). The life politics life style is characterized by self-actualization with an emphasis on individual responsibility.

At first glance, anytime, anyplace connectivity seems to support the life politics life style by creating new opportunities for individuals to organize their everyday social, work and personal activities more autonomously, aligned with their personal preferences and circumstances. In that regard, mobile communication technologies support ongoing processes of individuation and rationalization that characterize our late-modern society.

As mentioned above, a heightened reflexivity of individuals is central to processes of individuation and rationalization (Beck, Giddens, & Lash, 1994). Such reflexivity is also central to the process of domesticating mobile communication technologies into one's daily life, as domestication (cf. Silverstone & Haddon, 1996) requires a continuous negotiation of boundaries. Indeed, managing activities in a networked fashion (networked logic), building and maintaining 'pure' relationships (social logic), and constantly making decisions with respect to the tailoring of everyday identifiers (personal logic) can be seen as an ongoing negotiation of audiences, contents and boundaries in a collapsed and networked environment. The social, network and personal logic imply that individuals increasingly take responsibility in an environment where the social forms of time and space have become fluid and open, and boundaries permeable. Papacharissi and Gibson (2011, p. 78) mention in that regard that "modern and urban life charged individuals with the responsibility of managing their sociality, and their privacy, in unknown urban territory".

The social structures in mobile communication technologies thus force new processes of 'responsibilization' onto individuals that make them responsible for tasks for which they were previously not responsible (cf. Wakefield & Fleming, 2009, p. 276). With respect to the network logic, for example, individuals have greater autonomy over when and where they wish to activate certain social roles, as the spatio-temporal context is a less decisive factor for deciding when social roles and their associated activities, norms, and values start and end. The flipside of this is that the responsibility for activating these social roles falls onto the individual's shoulders.

Disentangling social activities from place does not render physical places (Castells et al., 2009) nor contexts (Nissenbaum, 2009) irrelevant. Place and context are always there, but they become background rather than foreground for social activities. For example, the role of a professor is to educate students, engage in fundamental research and hold a mirror up to society. A professor acts in the context of a university where her/his duties are defined by norms that dictate what is acceptable and what is not. But even within this context, it is less clear today than it was before when the role of professor ends and that of, let's say, family member begins. What is clear is that it is up to the individual to make these decisions and define roles and relationships that used to be implicit or structured in their practices. The ongoing negotiation in academia, but also industries and education to help disconnect the networked self, shows resistance in the form of efforts to mitigate the latter processes of responsibilization. For example, in Germany, after-hours emails to employees of BMW and Volkswagen are put on hold or deleted (Hesselberth, 2017).

The social logic pushes responsibility onto the individual in the social realm. Mobile social media enhance a specific kind of sociability: a networked sociability that constitutes a networked self, where one is able to communicate in a converged environment across multiple audiences, which supposes a "sense of place reflexivity" (Papacharissi, 2011). Mobile social media also support relationship maintenance by enabling individuals to frequently interact with others in ways that re-establish trust in these relationships. However, "connected presence" (Licoppe, 2004) blurs the boundaries between the physical and virtual realm because the individual must evaluate when and where to prioritize the near-constant stream of virtual interactions over ongoing offline activities, thereby entering a state of "absent presence" (Gergen, 2002). Particularly when these offline activities are themselves of a social nature (e.g., family dinner or date), the situation becomes messy, as the co-present interaction must compete with online activities that may (or may not) include mediated social communication (Turkle, 2011). The notification systems of mobile social media applications put pressure on the individual to respond (cf. Hopper's, 1992, "caller hegemony"); but when individuals do so, they risk harming the offline social interaction they are engaged in (e.g., Vanden Abeele, Antheunis, & Schouten, 2016).

The personal logic inherent in mobile communication technologies challenges individuals to make 'optimal' judgments at any time and place. Wearables, for example, offer new opportunities to monitor health (the 'quantified self'), but also make the individual responsible to act upon the monitored information. Individuals must decide if they desire this increased self-knowledge, taking into account that it may bestow guilt when, for example, the daily step count has not been reached. In addition, the individual user must be reflexive of these technologies, and realize, for example, that fitness-wearables typically normalize body weight and figure rather than taking into account the variety of possibilities. As Crawford, Lingel and Karppi (2015, p. 494) note, "users of wearables are told very little about the cultural and sci-

entific assumptions that undergird notions of the normal user, and they are simply placed in percentiles that lack any transparency in their construction of use". In other words, they need to be reflexive of the fact that the promise of agency (here: self-knowledge) is embedded in a structure with its own logics (here: disciplining the human body).

In sum, we would like to argue that the logics in mobile communication technologies increasingly shift responsibility to the individual. Not only are individuals increasingly responsible for making decisions and delineating boundaries in mobile communication technologies; the very process of decision-making has become more individualistic as well.

8. Consequences of Anytime, Anyplace Connectivity for Society: New Distributions of Power

The logics in mobile communication technologies have brought about profound social change in society, not only in everyday life, but also in the broader economic, political, and cultural sphere (e.g., Castells, 2009). In this section, we focus on three processes in which mobile communication technologies reproduce, challenge and shift power: political change, commodification, and surveillance.

With respect to political change, we see that the ability to address individuals directly and instantaneously has enabled new forms of political organization and communication. Mobile communication technologies have become key technologies in processes of political change. For instance, during the 'Arab Spring'—the 'protest cascade' in the Middle East in 2011—they were used to capture and share images of key events (e.g., Mohamed Bouazizi who set himself on fire in protest), to micro-coordinate protests in the streets 'below the radar' of the authorities, and to communicate with foreign media (Hussain & Howard, 2013). More recently, private acts have shown to have a political effect. For example, the private sharing of pussyhat selfies and/or #MeToo testimonials on (semi-)public social media platforms led to the social construction of feminist protest. According to Lindgren (2017, p. 156) "this hybrid dynamic is unique to the digital society, as these private acts can be carried out in personal, familiar, and autonomous spaces but still have the same potential audience as a public act". Mobile media thus enable low-threshold political participation, opening opportunities for a more participatory democracy. A flipside of not having to rely on an 'authority' such as the government or a news organization to obtain and exchange information is that information of unknown veracity may circulate. People are responsible for checking this veracity but may feel powerless to act upon that responsibility, as there is often a lack of transparency about the goals of the organizations producing and distributing the information. This sense of powerlessness may reflect itself in feelings of cynicism and alienation (e.g., Balmas, 2014). The observation that reflexive individuals may feel powerless puts under stress Giddens' ideal of the information revolution as a path towards greater human agency: rather than a power shift from authorities to the individual, we may be witnessing a shift from authorities to organizations and corporations that control information.

The social logic is present in a wide range of mobile social media applications. These applications, however, blur the roles of a consumer and that of a laborer. Already in 1977, Smythe criticized media companies for supporting the commodification process when he conceptualized the audience as both a commodity and a worker (Smythe, 1977). He indicated that selling audiences to advertisers accumulated capital, shifting the audience that *watches* into an audience that *works*. If we draw a parallel with contemporary society, we can see that achieving a state of "connected presence" (Licoppe, 2004) requires an ongoing connection to third parties, or 'invisible virtual employers', often without our explicit consent or even awareness. On this topic, Van Dijck (2013, p. 4) argues that "connectivity quickly evolved into a valuable resource as engineers found ways to code information into algorithms that helped brand a particular form of online sociality and make it profitable in online markets". Indeed, events such as the recent commotion surrounding Facebook and Cambridge Analytica reveal that the logic of perpetual contact is supported by an 'automated connectivity' where media platforms are trying to steer everyday practices (Van Dijck, 2013). Media platforms encompass systems that generate a false consciousness, preventing us from perceiving the limited autonomy we are actually given. For example, platforms typically offer users more options to manage their interpersonal information flows than that they receive options to regulate the flows of information towards third parties and service providers (Heyman, De Wolf, & Pierson, 2014).

The commodification of mobile media users and their mobile activities by third parties cannot be separated from the issue of technological surveillance. There are various ways in which mobile communication technologies underwrite a panopticon view on surveillance that further disempowers users. Foucault (1995) argued that the panopticon disposes an individual's subjectivity, reducing him/her to an object in a one-sided power relationship with those watching. According to him (p. 201), through a constant (feeling of) surveillance we internalize societal norms and values. The panopticon automatizes and de-individualizes power, making it also invisible and hard for people to criticize. This is applicable to the various, often 'free', mobile social media applications that we use. We produce highly personalized digital traces through these applications that are subject to 'dataveillance': a continuous tracking of our personal information by media corporations for unstated preset purposes (Van Dijck, 2014, p. 205).

The logics in mobile communication technologies do not only amplify panoptic surveillance; they also en-

able other forms of surveillance. In our social networks, the social logic of perpetual contact blurs the role of watchers and of those watched. Marwick (2012) introduced the term "social surveillance" next to the typical panopticon surveillance concept. In situations of social surveillance, power is intrinsic to every relationship, and surveillance is reciprocal, meaning that actors can surveil one another—the many watch the many, denoted as 'omniopticon'. Besides social surveillance, Leaver (2017) warns for intimate surveillance where parental monitoring through wearable technologies, for example, is normalized and perceived as a necessity in a culture of care (where a good parent is one that watches and monitors).

However, mobile media also enable 'sousveillance' or grassroots surveillance, an inverse form of surveillance that challenges power by countering organizational surveillance (Mann, Nolan, & Wellman, 2002). For example, citizens can use their mobile phone cameras to document police interventions. By using mobile media in ways that 'control' the controllers, individuals can challenge existing power structures and power relations.

9. Conclusion: Mobile Media and Social Space

This article presents three logics inherent in mobile communication technologies, a social, a network and a personal logic, and discusses how these alter social space at the micro-level, by structuring people's everyday practices, and re-shape social space at the macro-level, by affecting processes of social change (see Figure 1 for a graphical presentation).

Our analysis is not complete nor holistic, as the scope and depth of such an endeavor extends beyond what is possible in one article. However, we hope that the analytical lens presented can give impetus to further examinations of the relationship between mobile media affordances and social space, and of how social change is negotiated through that process. One particular point of consideration for such further examinations is that the social, network and personal logic are not the only logics inherent in mobile communication technologies. Because of technological convergence, current smartphone devices offer access to a multitude of services and media platforms. As a result, these devices have become a carrier of other logics, such as the social media logic (Van Dijck & Poell, 2013) and the news media logic (Dahlgren, 1996), but they add anytime, anyplace access to them. A pertinent question is how the social, network and personal logic intersect with each other and with these other logics, potentially amplifying each other's working in certain areas of life, thereby accelerating social change, but potentially also disrupting each other, thereby hampering social change.

Examinations of the interplay between mobile media and social space are essential in order to understand how technological structuration processes intersect with general structuration processes in society. As for mobile media technologies, our analysis of the social, network and personal logic exemplifies that societal processes may be *reinforced* (e.g., individual responsibilization), *challenged* (e.g., political participation) and sometimes even *reversed* (e.g., sousveillance) when the structures inher-

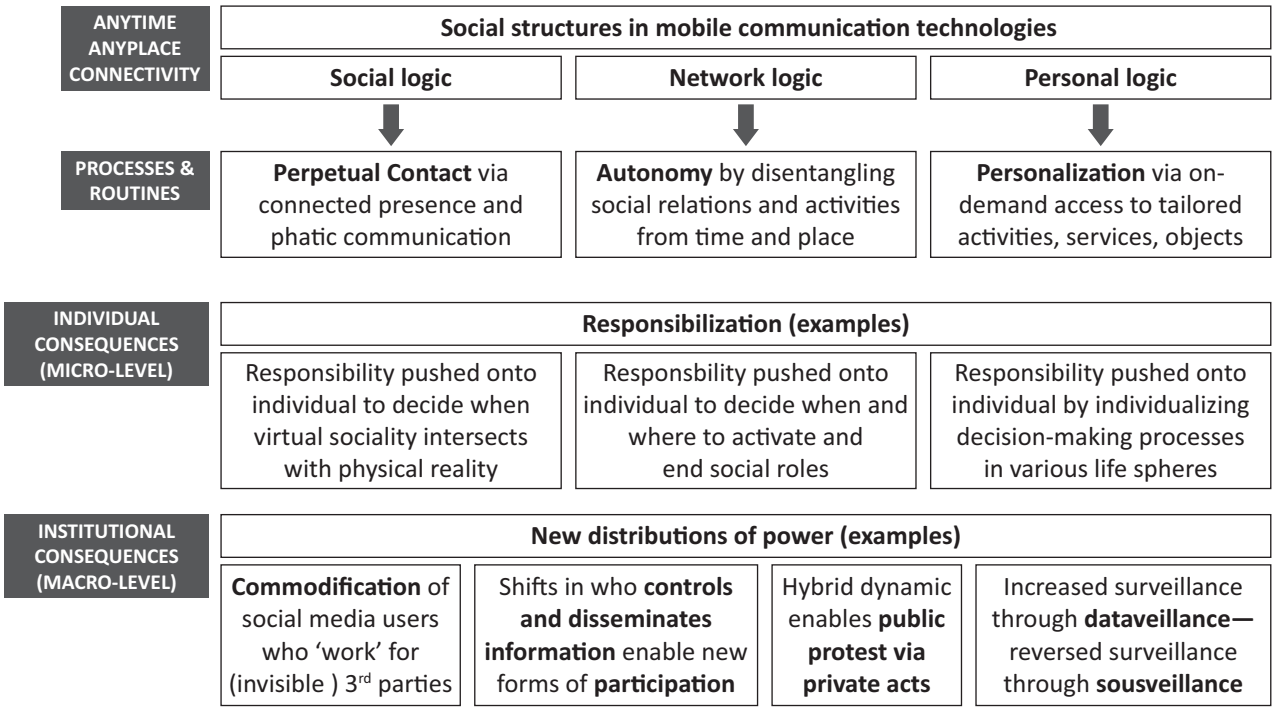

Figure 1. A visual presentation illustrating how the social, network and personal logic in mobile communication technologies affect processes and routines in everyday life, and, in turn, contribute to social change at the micro- and macro-level.

ent in mobile technologies are brought into action by individual users.

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Conflict of Interests

The authors declare no conflict of interests.

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Article

A Discursive Approach to Mediatisation: Corporate Technology Discourse and the Trope of Media Indispensability

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Abstract
Hitherto, and mainly by way of ethnographic studies, mediatisation research has informed us regarding the relevance, influence, and role of media in various spheres of social life. Less is known, however, about how mediatisation is *discursively* constructed. The relevance of constructivist approaches to mediatisation has been explicated, e.g., by Krotz (2017), who calls for critical mediatisation studies that consider the economic interests of mediatisation stakeholders, including the *ICT industry*. Against this backdrop, this article scrutinizes what the alleged 'mobility revolution' entails according to some who would benefit most from such a revolution. More concretely, the article studies the discursive practices of three leading corporations in the mobile communications sector: IBM, Huawei, and Ericsson. Stimulated by critical mediatisation theory as well as related accounts of the (technology) discourse-reality relationship, the article asks: if mobile media changes 'everything' in life—whose lives are being changed? If mobile media are 'indispensable' to modern ways of living—what are they supposed to do? Ultimately, the article speaks to the theme of this thematic issue by interrogating *how contemporary mobile technology discourse contributes to the (re-)production of social space*. Findings suggest that mediatisation is constructed as the response to an internal human drive for connectivity and as an inexorable natural force. Three sub-discourses on mobile technology are identified: 'technologies of cosmos', 'technologies of self', and, ultimately, 'technologies of life'. Altogether, these sub-discourses disclose and reinforce the hegemonic nature of mediatisation by communicating the *indispensability* of mobile media in modern—notably, urban and privileged—lives. In addition to providing answers to the study's empirical questions, the article includes a discussion about the potential implications of existing discourse overlaps between ICT companies and mediatisation theorists, as well as a sketch for an agenda for the 'discursive turn' in mediatisation studies.

Keywords
discursive turn; media indispensability; mediatisation; mobile media; mobility revolution; technology discourse; Social Construction of Technology (SCOT); social space

Issue
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1. Introduction

When the 'World Wide Web' started to mature, the 'information revolution' was celebrated by researchers, politicians, policy makers, and others. Today, a new kind of technologically driven revolution is said to emerge: the *mobility revolution*. Predictably, the revolutionary potentials of mobile media are particularly promoted by Information and Communication Technology (ICT) companies. The multinational corporation Ericsson, for example, claims in their investors reports that mobile media have led us to 'the brink of an extraordinary revolution that will change our world forever' (Ericsson, 2017, p. 2). In a similar vein, Ericsson's competitor IBM states in one of their most recent booklets that 'Just as the Internet did before, mobile networks—and the devices that exploit them—are radically changing the way we interact with the world' (IBM, 2017, p. 1). Obviously, producers

of communications technology have a stake in marketing their gadgets as *desirable*. This ambition is at the core of all advertising (Ewen, 2001). Beyond creating consumer demand for singular commodities, however, commercial corporations also have a stake in shaping public opinion on a larger scale. By presenting mobile media as tools of radical change, ICT companies ultimately construct such media as *indispensable—as things necessary to lead a good life*.

While heavily promoted by technology producers, the *media indispensability* trope is not exclusive to the ICT industry. Rather, the trope also occurs in media research and in mediatisation theory especially. Although there are still many suggestions as to how to define *mediatisation* (cf. Couldry & Hepp, 2013; Ekström, Fornäs, Jansson, & Jerslev, 2016; Hepp & Couldry, 2016; Hjarvard, 2013; Krotz, 2009, 2017; Lundby, 2009), the notion of media indispensability has been suggested as key to the concept. Jansson (2014, 2015a, 2015b, 2018) argues that today 'we can see that media are generally, and to an increasing extent, perceived as *indispensable* to the interactions between individuals and groups' (Jansson, 2015a, p. 380, original emphasis). Notwithstanding other areas of potential dispute, then, mediatisation researchers and the ICT industry seem to unite in the recognition of media technologies as *agents of social change*. However, whereas the media indispensability trope appears in both corporate texts and mediatisation literature, there are some significant differences in term of *how* the alleged change is regarded.

Contrary to much ICT rhetoric, critical mediatisation studies tend to highlight the *social costs* of actual or perceived media dependence, including, for instance, anxieties associated with the dissolved boundaries between work and leisure (Fast & Lindell, 2016), feelings of unease connected with mediated forms of self-realization or 'recognition work' (Jansson, 2018, Chapter 4), or, more generally, perceptions of entanglement (Hjarvard, in press). Similar alternative discourses on media indispensability—and guidelines for how to deal with the down-sides of media dependence—also flourish in contemporary public debates. Symptomatically, *Forbes* magazine recently forecasted 'digital detox' as a dominant trend of 2018: 'It started happening ever so quietly in the fourth quarter of 2017. The digital detox. Now, watch for it to be a major trend in 2018. From your work life to your personal life, everyone is in search of the ultimate luxury: tech-free hours' (Goldston, 2018). Currently thus, competing narratives exist in relation to media indispensability. Aside from 'detox handbooks' offered by trend-sensitive journalists, workers' unions, parenting groups, health organisations, occupational health care units, and other civil organisations are presently contributing to public awareness around some of the more troublesome aspects of mediatisation.

Hitherto, and mainly by way of ethnographic studies, mediatisation research has informed us of the relevance, influence, and role of media in various spheres of social life, including, for example, close relationships (Klausen & Møller, 2018), parenthood (Damkjaer, 2017), mobile livelihoods (Jansson, 2018; Polson, 2016), work life (Gregg, 2011), politics (Esser & Strömbäck, 2014), and religion (Hjarvard, 2008). Less is known, however, about how mediatisation, or the idea of media as indispensable drivers of social change, is discursively constructed. Against this backdrop, this article identifies a need for a *discursive turn* in mediatisation research and so approaches the 'mobility revolution' from a discursive standpoint. The relevance of constructivist approaches to mediatisation has been explicated by Krotz (2017), who calls for critical mediatisation studies that consider the economic interests of mediatisation stakeholders, including the telecom industry. As a process accomplished by humans rather than a natural given, he argues, mediatisation must 'be reconstructed critically in order to find the points where the civil society was not asked' (Krotz, 2017, p. 114). While alternative interpretations of the social consequences of media indispensability (such as those mentioned above) are obviously gaining momentum in the public debate, Krotz's call for critical studies of mediatisation stakeholders is indeed sympathetic given the rampant financial and soft powers of ICT corporations (Nye, 2002).

This article responds to Krotz's and others' recent pleas for critical mediatisation studies (see also, e.g., Jansson, 2013, 2018), by asking what the alleged mobility revolution entails according to some of those who would benefit the most from such a revolution. More concretely, the article studies the discursive practices of three leading corporations in the mobile communications sector: American IBM, Chinese Huawei, and Swedish Ericsson. Stimulated by critical mediatisation theory as well as related accounts of the (technology) discourse-reality relationship (e.g. Berger & Luckmann, 1966; Fisher, 2010a, 2010b; Marvin, 1988; Pinch & Bijker, 1984; Schutz, 1967; Williams, 1974), the article asks: if mobile media changes 'everything' in life—*whose lives are being changed?* If mobile media are 'indispensable' to modern ways of living—*what are they supposed to do?* Ultimately, the article speaks to the theme of this thematic issue 'Media and Social Space: Analysing Mediation and Power' by interrogating *how contemporary mobile technology discourse contributes to the (re-)production of social space*.

In this article, the meaning of *social space* lies at the intersection of the Bourdieusian and Lefebvreian understandings of the concept. While the two understandings of social space can seem at odds with one another—not least given their differences in terms of weight given to *place*—they can be fruitfully brought together in analyses to point at the interrelationship between discourse and social power (see, e.g., Centner, 2008, for such an analysis, centred around the concept of 'spatial capital'). Bourdieu's (1989, 1998) social space is a space of *positions* defined in relation to one another, in which groups of agents who share similar circumstances (habi-

tus/capital) can form social classes. Lefebvre's (1991), relatively more territorialised, notion of social space is three-dimensional, consisting of *perceived* ('spatial practice'), *conceived* ('representations of space'), and *lived* ('representational spaces') space. Focusing on discourse, this article is chiefly occupied with conceived space; that is, the space constructed by 'scientists, planners, urbanists, technocratic sub-dividers…social engineers (Lefebvre, 1991, p. 31), and other groups in society. However, in line with Lefebvre's trialectic as well as the aggregate analytical framework utilized by this study, this article recognises the production of space as a multidimensional process involving all three layers of space. This implies, in short, acknowledging the role played by mobile technology discourse in the overall reproduction of power relationships (Bourdieu, 1977).

In addition to providing answers to the empirical questions posed above, the article includes a discussion about the potential implications of existing discourse overlaps between ICT companies and mediatisation theorists, as well as a sketch for a research agenda for critical constructivist mediatisation studies.

2. Theoretical Framework

The present article positions itself against deterministic claims about technology as *the* driver of social change but accepts that media technology can be *one* potential source of transformation. In taking this position, the article aligns with three distinct yet interrelated theory fractions, which form the analytical framework of this study. Next to *mediatisation theory*, the article incorporates insights from *the social construction of technology* (SCOT) paradigm and technology discourse theory. These theory fractions are interrelated in that they all embrace social constructivism yet distinct in that they still tend to be differently biased in terms of *where* agency is primarily located: if mediatisation research thus far has been chiefly interested in the ways in which technology shapes the social, SCOT (e.g., Humphreys, 2005; Pinch & Bijker, 1984) tends to accentuate the impact of the social on technology. Hence, combining mediatisation theory and SCOT means finding a fruitful middle-way between technological and social 'determinism' (Latour, 2005). What both frameworks have payed less attention to, however, is the role of *discourse* in the construction of the social, including technology. Since technology discourse perspectives (e.g. Fisher, 2010a, 2010b) tend to emphasise the reciprocity between discourse and reality precisely, they offer a valuable, third, point-of-entry into this article's object of study. In the end, the combination of mediatisation theory, SCOT, and technology discourse theory enables critical examinations of how technology discourse contributes to the production of social space. It equips us to scrutinise imagined user modes (*who is supposed to use what technology in what way?*), imagined user contexts (*where is technology supposed to be used?*), and ultimately questions of inclusion and exclusion (*who is part/not part of the 'mobility revolution'?*). In the following sections, the study's theoretical framework is elaborated.

2.1. Mediatisation as Media Indispensability

'Mediatisation' is a contested concept (Deacon & Stanyer, 2014; Hepp, Hjarvard, & Lundby, 2015) and parts of the debate has evolved around the 'question of technology' (Jensen, 2013, p. 215). Theorists employing a social constructivist outlook on mediatisation have been particularly prone to promote 'non-media-centric' (cf. Morley, 2009) or 'holistic' (Jansson, 2013) mediatisation studies that contest the technological determinism usually associated with medium theory (Hepp & Krotz, 2014; Jensen, 2013). Hepp and Krotz (2014) are among those who argue for the usefulness of social constructivist approaches to mediatisation and define, accordingly, mediatisation as 'a concept used in order to carry out a critical analysis of the interrelation between the change of media and communication, on the one hand, and the change of culture and society on the other' (Hepp & Krotz, 2014, p. 7). They conceptualise mediatisation partly by explaining the differences between mediatisation research and medium theory (McLuhan, 1964; Meyrowitz, 1986) and critique, among other things, the medium theorist idea that each society is dominated by a single medium. Such a perception, they claim, is invalid, especially in today's trans-medial landscape where various media are inescapably intertwined: 'It's not just the mobile phone that makes the difference for our present everyday lives, but how the mobile phone interacts with social media, e-mail, digital television, and so on' (Hepp & Krotz, 2014, p. 9).

Mediatisation theory, contrary to medium theory, recognises media influence 'beyond simple casual effects' of particular media technologies (Hepp, 2012, p. 17). Hepp's (2012) conceptualisation of mediatisation as processes of 'moulding' is in turn embedded in Jansson's (2014, 2015b, 2018) critical *media indispensability* approach to mediatisation, which understands mediatisation as 'a movement through which media technologies and related artefacts become necessary for carrying out practices that are essential to the maintenance of society in its various parts, and places and practices become materially adapted to the existence of media' (Jansson, 2014, p. 275). However, as Jansson (2014) points out, media technologies do not become indispensable unless they get meaningfully integrated in life at large. How, then, might such integration occur?

In order to reach a fuller understanding of how media become indispensable, to people and to societies at large, it is useful to consult the analytical toolbox provided by Schulz (2004). Schulz suggests four processes through which mediatisation is realised: *extension*, *substitution*, *amalgamation*, and *accommodation*. Influenced by medium theory, Schulz acknowledges that media *extend* the possibilities of communicating across

time, space, and in different modes. Additionally, media can entirely or partially replace, or *substitute*, social activities (i.e., video gaming substituting face-to-face gaming). Another tendency is that non-media-related activities merge with, or *amalgamate*, media-related dittos. Lastly, Schulz argues that various spheres of social life become increasingly affected by a 'media logic' (2004, p. 89). Thus, other societal institutions tend to *accommodate* such a media logic in the sense that they, consciously or unconsciously, adjust their acting to the media.

Schulz's (2004) theoretical framework can be used to operationalise Jansson's media indispensability approach and has informed my analyses of contemporary mobile media discourse. Ultimately, Schulz's typology of mediatisation points to the complex relationship between technology and the social, albeit with an obvious focus on *the former's effects on the latter*. Thus, in order to prepare for an even more reflexive approach to the technology/social relationship, I will now introduce the interrelated but 'inverted' perspective offered by the SCOT paradigm. In addition to serving as a complement to mentioned mediatisation theory, SCOT is also valuable in that it accentuates power inequalities between different social groups.

2.2. The Social Construction of Technology

Reading technology as a social construct is at the core of the SCOT framework. Pinch and Bijker (1984) created SCOT for discerning how 'relevant social groups' negotiate the *meaning* of technological artefacts. 'Social group' refers to institutions and organisations as well as organised or unorganised groups of individuals, a key requirement being that 'all members of a certain social group share the same set of meanings, attached to a specific artefact' (Pinch & Bijker, 1984, p. 414). A fundamental notion to SCOT is that different social groups have different problems to solve as well as different technological solutions to those problems. The inevitable consequence is that artefacts tend to be subjected to 'interpretative flexibility' (Pinch & Bijker, 1984, p. 419). The right to define a technological invention—and to bring 'rhetorical closure' (Pinch & Bijker, 1984, p. 426) to controversy—is fought over by different social groups, differently positioned in social space depending on their resources (or, forms and amounts of capital, to speak with Bourdieu, 1977, 1989).

For this article, Humphreys' (2005) reframing of the 'relevant social groups' concept into four main groups—*producers*, *advocates*, *users*, and *bystanders*—is especially valuable. The producers include 'those who have a vested economic interest in the continued proliferation of a technological artefact' (Humphreys, 2005, p. 235). Humphreys adds to this group not only engineers and designers, but also *advertisers* and *marketers*. 'Through language', she acknowledges, 'marketers and advertisers play an important role in determining how people understand a technology' (see also MacKay & Gillespie, 1992, for similar arguments). By this token, *discursive practices* play a momentous role in the SCOT, as in the making of reality at large (cf. Berger & Luckmann, 1966; Foucault, 1972; Schutz, 1967).

Before continuing the technology (as) discourse perspective, a short note should be made around the usefulness of SCOT for studying the social construction of mobile media. SCOT was built for scrutinising the construction of particular technological artefacts, such as the bike. My study, however, concerns 'mobile media' as an assemblage of technologies (i.e. as cloud infrastructures, mobile broadband, mobile phones, portable tablets, etc.) rather than a specific medium (utterly, my understanding of 'mobile media' is informed by the technology discourse studied). This approach, in turn, corresponds with Hepp and Krotz's (2014) previously presented critique of medium theory. As they argue, the contemporary media landscape is essentially trans-medial, and today's analytical models must hence acknowledge the increasingly complex interrelations between media. Thus, whilst my appropriation of SCOT might go against Pinch and Bijker's (1984) original intent, I would argue that analyses of the social construction of 'mobile media' have much to gain from being—at times at least—non-media-*specific*.

2.3. Technology (As) Discourse

Technological inventions are surrounded by 'myth'; by more or less phantasmagorical statements about their 'goodness' (Robins & Webster, 1999, p. 151). Technology producers face the delicate challenge of presenting new media artefacts as unfrightening, even mundane, and at the same time 'magical' (Mosco, 2004). Marvin's (1988) essayistic exploration of discourses surrounding electricity and telephony in the late 19th century discloses how this challenge was dealt with by different social groups and manifested in various accounts of the new inventions. Marvin stresses how conflicting discourses on what the technology *should do* and *for whom* were produced by, on the one hand, the powerful 'experts' who struggled to maintain the right to define the technology in question and, on the other hand, the less informed 'public'. By expounding how these conflicts in turn reflected larger social battles of the late 19th century—between dominant and dominated classes, genders, ethnic groups, etc.—Marvin's work demonstrates the power of discourse to structure the social world.

The structuring powers of discourse were also of concern to Foucault (1972), who regarded discourse as fundamental to *legitimisation* processes. Habermas (1971), furthermore, theorised the ideological functions of technology discourse specifically. Following Habermas, Fisher (2010a) proposes that contemporary technology discourse constitutes a legitimation discourse for post-Fordist capitalism: 'Post-Fordist social relations are not the inevitable social consequences of technological innovations…but also the result of discursive practices which have made such social transformations seem natural, neutral and inevitable, precisely because they

are presented as ultimately technological (p. 244). This points to the complex relationship between technology, discursive practices, and society: technology discourse tends not only to make social transformations seem *universal*—to the extent that 'everybody', 'everywhere' is included (cf. Hand & Sandywell, 2002; Poster, 2008), it also presents social space as essentially homogenous and free from conflict.

However, as we know from earlier research, the power to define what various technologies should be, or for whom, is unevenly distributed across social space (Marvin, 1998; Russell, 1986), as is technology access *per se* (Ragnedda & Muschert, 2013). In addition, there are moral dimensions to media use that may spur or hamper individuals' engagement with particular technologies, in particular contexts. In Bengtsson's (2011) words, various 'imagined user modes' guide our daily interactions with the media. These modes, she explains, 'are not related to the media text or technology in itself, but rather to ideas of different technologies and texts and, more specifically, to *ideas of how they affect their users'* (Bengtsson, 2011, p. 193, original emphasis). Although Bengtsson stresses that there is not *one* source to these modes but rather that they form as a combination of personal value systems, culturally constructed norms, and the specific traits of a medium and its content, corporate technology discourse is a source rich in ideas about what constitutes proper media use for different social groups.

3. Data and Method

Technology discourse emerges in various social contexts. This article limits itself to accounts and statements by multinational ICT companies IBM, Huawei and Ericsson. IBM is headquartered in New York, U.S. and describes itself as 'a cognitive solutions and cloud platform company' (IBM.com, 2018). IBM was incorporated in 1911 as a hardware company, but has over the years moved its operations to software and services. Currently, IBM operates in around 170 countries and through five segments: Cognitive Solutions, Global Business Services (GBS), Technology Services & Cloud Platforms, Systems and Global Financing (IBM.com, 2018). Revenue was $80 billion in 2016. Huawei Technologies Co., Ltd. presents itself as 'a leading global information and communications technology (ICT) solutions provider' (Huawei.com, 2018). The company is headquartered in Shenzhen, China, and has since its founding in 1987 expanded its business from phone switches to telecommunications networks, operational and consulting services, and equipment aimed at enterprises. Huawei also produces communication devices for the consumer market. Huawei operates in around 170 countries and revenue was $75.1 billion in 2016. Telefonaktiebolaget LM Ericsson was founded in 1876 and soon became one of Scandinavia's top telephone suppliers. The company is headquartered in Stockholm and operates in around 180 countries. Ericsson presents itself as 'a world leader in the rapidly changing environment of communications technology—providing equipment, software and services to enable transformation through mobility' (Ericsson.com, 2018). Revenue in 2016 was $26 billion.

The companies were selected as cases first and foremost because of their strong positions and hence impact in the mobile communications market, but also because their aggregate operations cover the full spectrum of existent mobile technologies: from mobile devices and software to supporting technological infrastructures, such as mobile broadband, cloud technologies, 'smart' systems, etc. All companies are advocates of the 'mobility revolution' and sell mobile media technologies. Studying ICT corporations, this article concentrates on one of the most influential social groups identified by Humphreys' (2005, p. 234)—the *producers*, who have an organisational/economic stake in technology.

Discourse has been described as 'a certain 'way of speaking' (Foucault, 1972, p. 193). This particular study is limited to *corporate* technology discourse. Corporate discourse refers to 'the set of messages that a corporation chooses to send to the world at large and to its target markets or existing customers' (Breeze, 2013, p. 19). The larger linguistic units studied include material typically sorted under the 'Investor Relations' rubric on the organisations'. Annual reports are at the core of this study, but has—following David (2001)—been contextualised through collection of related material from the corporate websites, i.e., white papers (e.g. IBM's *Return on Mobile*), in-house articles (e.g. from Ericsson's *Technological Review*), blog posts (e.g. Ericsson's *The Networked Society Blog* [which over the course of the study became *The Big Ideas Blog: Transformation through Mobility*]), other reports (e.g. IBM's *Individual Enterprise: How Mobility Redefines Business*) and advertisements. In the annual reports, the narrative sections have been of primary interest. These include the executive's letter and summaries of operations, typically accompanied by eye-catching illustrations. Tinker and Neimark (1987) stress that such texts 'play an important part in forming the world-view or social ideology' (p. 72). Compatible perspectives are also offered by David (2001), who writes specifically on mythmaking in annual reports. These types of 'workplace documents', he explains, are typically 'not isolated in one business but reflect and influence the wider political, institutional, social, and legal policies of the culture' (David, 2001, p. 196). What is more, the myths that these documents build tend to influence other domains of communication, such as newspaper discourse or marketing (David, 2001).

In terms of data selection, all annual reports retrievable on the corporate websites (81 in total) were downloaded (IBM all years 1994–2016; Huawei all years 2006–2016; Ericsson all years 1970–2016). Given the purpose of this study, particular attention has been paid to statements about mobile technology (which, due to the key role played by such technology in the selected corporations' operations is highly present in the studied mate-

rial). The same principle was applied in the selection of the contextualising corporate communication from the websites. All materials have been stored electronically and in print, and have been subjected to a qualitative analysis that considers written discourse as well as visual representations. In the selection of examples, representativeness has been a guiding principle. Hence, I have primarily illustrated my findings with quotes and imagery that are typical rather than atypical for the analysed linguistic units.

4. Findings

This empirical section demonstrates how the *media indispensability* trope is constructed by IBM, Huawei, and Ericsson, and in continuation how contemporary corporate technology discourse constructs the media-social space juncture. I begin by exemplifying how the 'mobility revolution', at large, is constructed, and continue with a systematic analysis guided by Schulz's (2004) typology of mediatisation to deconstruct the notion of media indispensability (Jansson, 2014, 2015b, 2018).

4.1. Mediatisation as a Human Drive and Natural Force

The strongest message communicated by IBM, Huawei and Ericsson is that the world is undergoing *significant* and *rapid change* due to technological advancement. This narrative cuts across all of the most recent annual reports, from all three corporations. In their 2011 annual report, for example, IBM states that 'Without question, the world is undergoing disruption' (IBM, 2011, p. 4). Ericsson echoes the rhetoric in their 2015 annual report, claiming that 'We are living in a truly remarkable time. The pace of change in society, in our industry and within Ericsson has never been faster' (Ericsson, 2015, p. 2). Huawei, correspondingly, writes in their 2014 annual report of 'the coming industrial revolution' (Huawei, 2014, p. 2) and predicts that 'The future fully-connected world will have a far-reaching impact on every individual, organisation, and industry' (2014, p. 2). Technological advancements in the domain of mobile media are attributed particular transformative powers, as illustrated by this statement by Ericsson:

> The potential of the Networked Society lies in transformation through mobility. Transformation in the way people organize their individual lives and carry out vital tasks. Transformation in the way we work, the way we share information, and the way we do business. Transformation in the way we consume and the way we create. (Ericsson, 2016, p. 1)

Ericsson's 'Networked Society' has its parallel in Huawei's vision of a 'Better Connected World'. This connected world, as stated by Huawei in their 2014 annual report, responds to an 'enduring human drive' for connectivity across spatial and temporal boundaries. In this world, furthermore, mobile and connected media will drive 'global progress' and 'improve work and life for all' (Huawei, 2014, p. 2). IBM, on their part, claims that what we anticipate is an 'emerging global culture, defined not by age or geography, but by people determined to change the practices of business and society' (IBM, 2013, p. 2). Ericsson is equally prone to praise the equalising powers of mobile technologies: 'Mobile broadband decreases geographical and socioeconomic gaps and improve life quality across the globe' (Ericsson, 2012, p. 14). In their recent *Networked Society Essentials* brochure, Ericsson further explains what the networked society means for our 'future' and 'planet':

> The Networked Society is not really about the connections however, but rather about the impact these are having on our world. It's about new ways for us to collaborate, share and get informed. It's about innovative ways of doing business that are creating efficiencies in the public and private sectors. And it's about how we can shape the future together and find solutions to some of the greatest challenges facing our planet. (Ericsson, 2016, p. 2)

Thus, in line with much globalisation theory—or what Bude and Dürrschmidt (2010) have criticised as 'flowspeak'—IBM, Huawei and Ericsson present mobile media as means to create a world without borders. Mobile devices are hence promoted as 'technologies of the cosmos' (Tomlinson, 2008) that invite participation in a global, deterritorialised, culture (Giddens, 1990). The frequency of utterances like 'everyone', 'for all', 'global culture', 'everywhere', 'the world', 'across the globe' and 'every individual' across the linguistic units of analysis is striking and contribute to the establishment of a cosmopolitan ethos in studied texts. The McLuhanian metaphor of the world as a 'global village', where everyone is connected through media, is repeatedly communicated, albeit in varied wordings. The seeming inevitability of this development frames mediatisation as a democratic *natural force* that sweeps the globe. As illustrated by Figures 1 and 2, this world is typically represented through ultra-urban imageries connoting high-speed, metropolitan, lifestyles (this is a point that we shall return to).

According to Ericsson, the networked society is a society 'where every person and every industry is empowered to reach their full potential' (Ericsson, 2016, p. 1). Along the same lines, Ericsson's narrative recognizes that we are currently living in 'the age of empowerment' (quote from Ericsson's slideshow 'The Networked Society', retrieved from Slideshare.net, September 12, 2017). Thus, mobile media are not only constructed as means of social change on a global, collective, level, but also as means of *individual empowerment* (see Figure 3). Mobile media are ultimately constituted as 'technologies of self' (cf. O'Flynn & Petersen, 2007, p. 468) by which individuals can take control over their life-situation. Thus, in par-

Figure 1. Visionary imagery retrieved from Huawei's official website, July 10, 2017.

Figure 2. 'Everywhere, everyone, everything'. Cover of Ericsson's Annual report 2012.

allel with the visionary cosmopolitan narrative is an individualistic, neoliberal, 'enterprise-self' jargon (cf. Foucault, 1977, on self-disciplining) that runs across all three cases of corporate communication. As we shall see later, this kind of discourse is particularly manifest in narratives about technology-driven transformations of work.

4.2. Media and Social Change—A Schulzian Approach

Representations of mobile media as extensions of man (Schulz, 2004) contribute to the construction of media indispensability. Mobile media, the corporate texts propose, enable connectivity 'whenever' and 'wherever'. Technology is hence claimed to abolish temporal and spatial borders and enable long-distance and immediate connectivity. Visually, this theme is typically presented through images of technology use in shifting social contexts, such as the home, office, beach, subway, etc. (Figure 4).

Present in the studied material is, thus, also a narrative on media ubiquity, which in turn stimulates the idea of 'placelessness' (Meyrowitz, 1986): 'With mobile broadband, you're not tied down by a cable, or even by a wireless hotspot. Wherever you're going, what-

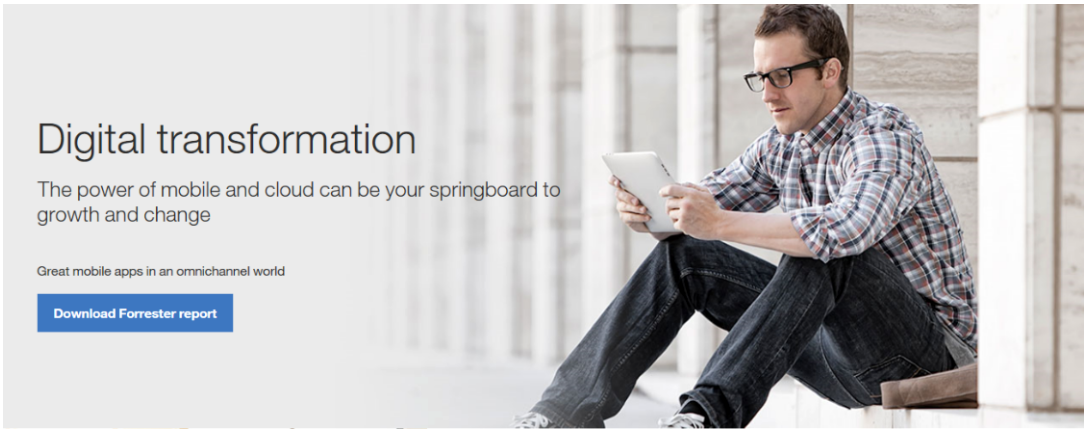

Figure 3. Screenshot from IBM's website, February 22, 2017.

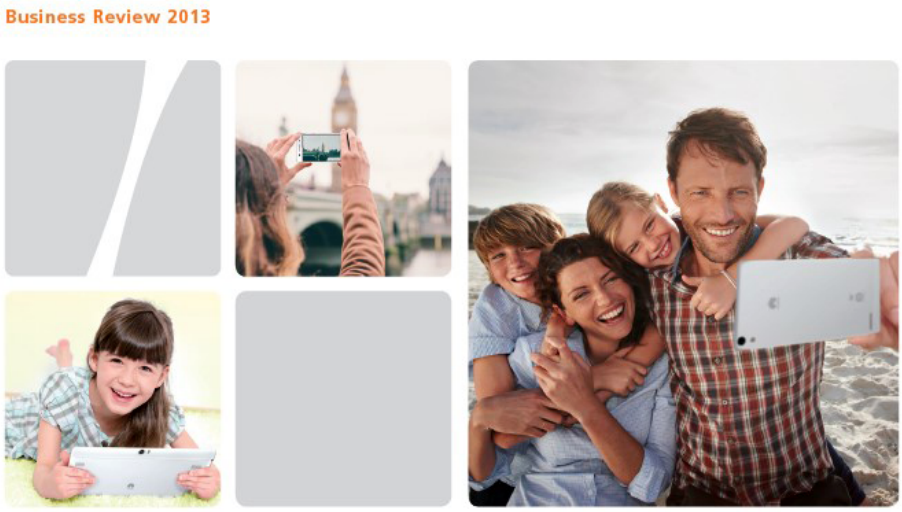

Figure 4. Ubiquitous media. Imagery from Huawei's Annual report 2013 (p. 23).

ever you're doing, you take the world with you' (Ericsson, 2010, p. 2). As stated by Ericsson, the spatial-transgressive connectivity provided by mobile media, enable new ways of organising life. What media mobility means for *work life* is particularly articulated in researched corporate documents, and all three corporations have webpage sections and reports dedicated to this theme.

It is also in the work context that the media as *substitution* (Schulz, 2004) theme is most apparent. Mobile media are promoted as replacements of face-to-face interactions and 'good work', the corporate jargon suggests, involves mobile solutions. As found also by Fisher (2010a), there are remarkable similarities between corporate technology discourse and post-Fordist capitalist discourse. Overall, work with mobile media is described as 'smart', 'effective', 'flexible', 'engaging', and 'empowering'. Under the headline 'Reimagining Work' in their 2014 annual report, IBM offers a vision of future work life, in which 'systems of engagement' will drive businesses and redistribute power from employers to employees (IBM, 2014, p. 14). The blurring of boundaries between work life and private life that mobile media contribute to—a trend oftentimes criticised for its potentially negative effect on mental health, family life, workers' rights, etc. (e.g., Gregg, 2011)—is typically embraced, as illustrated by this statement in Ericsson's 2013 annual report:

> social media and communication services are eroding the borders between private and professional lives….The blurred boundaries between work and private life also change our understanding of what it means to work. When restrictions in terms of time and geographic location become obsolete, more people can work more effectively in a global workplace. (p. 133; author's translation)

Huawei also constructs mobile media, and mobile internet, specifically, as a 'game changer for billions of people, both at work and in their personal lives' (Huawei, 2015, p. 15). Mobile technologies are presented as 'digital assistants' that 'can help coordinate your life and work schedules anytime and anywhere' (Huawei, 2015, p. 18).

Judging from the visual representations accompanying these visionary statements, mainly white-collar jobs are affected by these changes. This, in turn, corresponds

to a general observation regarding the visual representation of technology in the studied material. The mobile media technologies are predominantly inserted into urban milieus and placed in the hands of seemingly capital rich 'knowledge-workers' (Figures 5 and 6; revisit also figures 1–4). When images of subordinate classes or other types of workers do appear, it is chiefly in relation to the cosmopolitan narratives or under document headings like 'corporate social responsibility', 'sustainable development' or 'global perspectives'. In those cases, photos typically display media use in remote villages in developing countries, so as to prove the transformative potential of the technology. In short, forms of mediatised 'privileged mobility' (Polson, 2016; Tesfahuney & Schough, 2016)—including commuting to/from work—are typically presented in Western (or at least Westernized), metropolitan, cities, whereas media-induced 'social mobility' tend to be exemplified through imagery from rural milieus in non-Western(-ised) areas Figure 7).

To the extent that seemingly capital rich subjects are portrayed in non-urban settings, this is mainly while performing other types of privileged mobility, most notably connected to tourism, sport, and leisure. Outside of office environments, mobile media devices are typically displayed in remote, previously non- or at least less mediated, places. Representations of such activities also correspond with Schulz's (2004) notion of *amalgamation*, or the integration between mediated (e.g. GPS-tracking or photography) and non-mediated activities (e.g., mountain climbing or hiking). Also corresponding to this notion are the frequently used concepts of 'smartness' and 'Internet of Things'. 'Smart' homes, cars, cities, workplaces, even bodies, (cf. Rose, 2018) represent the true collapse of mediated and non-mediated spaces and practices. Thus, the indispensability of mobile media is further reinforced in narratives pertaining to what Couldry and Hepp (2016) refer to as *deep mediatisation*; 'where every element of social process and social life is composed of elements that have already been mediated'. No areas of life, the corporate texts suggest, are untouched by the ongoing technological transformations. Connected things are portrayed as key to the 'Networked Society' envisioned by Ericsson as well as to the 'Better Connected World' imagined by Huawei. Ultimately, Huawei foresees a total integration of 'the physical world' and the 'digital world' (Huawei, 2015, p. 15). 'Humanity', the company foresees, 'will soon enter a fully connected age, where the heartbeat of humanity will soon be as much digital as it is physical' (Huawei, 2015, p. 16). Using the language of biologism, thus, Huawei presents ongoing transformations as *immanent* to human nature.

It lies in the interest of communication corporations to accentuate their significance not only as enablers of 'social change' and 'individual empowerment', but also as pivotal to the economy at large. Hence, what Schulz's (2004) refers to as *accommodation* is primarily acknowledged and promoted as a 'mobile media logic' (Henrique & Damasia, 2016) that affect other societal institutions, most notably other businesses. Such a mobile media logic is identified by all three corporations (albeit not conceptualized as such) and corresponds to the 'empowering' 'flexibility' discourse described earlier. The opening page of IBM's annual report from 2016, with its personal tone of address, is illustrative: 'Every profession in every industry in every part of the world is changing, simultaneously. You are drawing on a wealth of new data, knowledge, insights, and tools. You are being equipped to rethink your job, and freed to do your life's work' (IBM, 2016, p. 1). Ericsson shares IBM's vision and stresses that 'Digitalization and information flows are

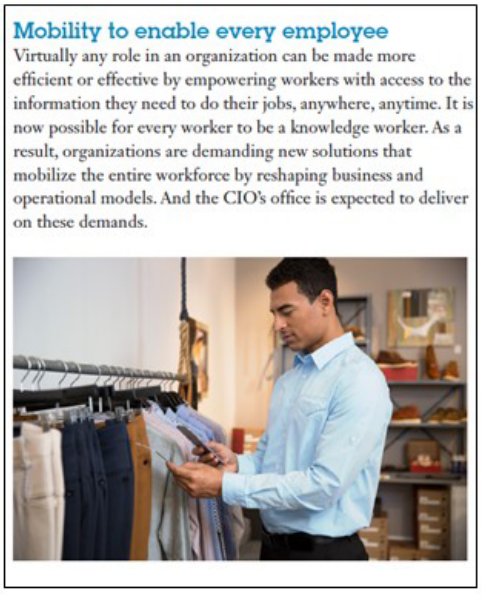

Figure 5. (left): Image retrieved from IBM's MobileFirst Whitepaper, 2016 (p. 2).

Figure 6. (right): Image retrieved from IBM's official website IBM.com, July 10, 2017.

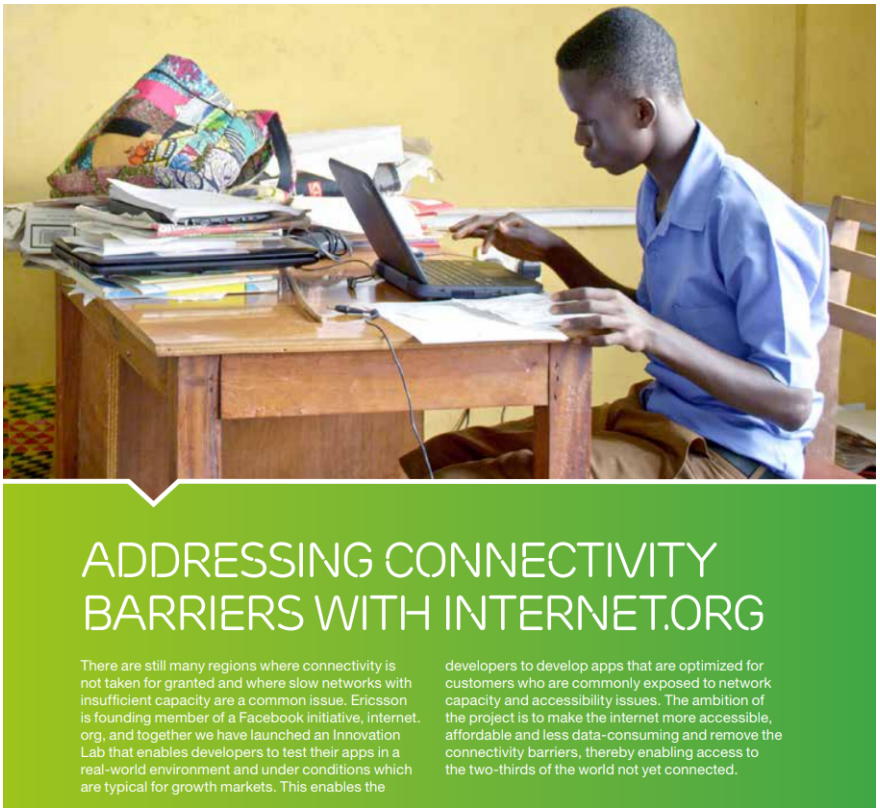

Figure 7. Technological emancipation. Source: Ericsson's 2014 annual report (p. 40).

enabling organizations to work in new ways' (Ericsson, 2013, p. 133). Ericsson's statement, in turn, is remarkably similar to Huawei's depiction of what new media technology will mean for businesses outside of the ICT industry: 'The Internet of Things, e-Commerce, and digital media among others are driving the upgrading and restructuring of traditional industries' (Huawei, 2012, p. 5). What is more, Huawei is explicit about the consequences for those businesses who do not keep up with the latest innovations: 'With full connectivity, enterprises in every industry will digitise their business systems, and *those who fail to go digital will perish*'. (Huawei, 2015, p. 16, emphasis added). While unusually drastic, Huawei's fatal statement in their 2015 annual report is symptomatic of the technology discourse produced by all three corporations studied. It is the inverted version of all the celebratory claims about what mobile media technologies will do for society, businesses, and individuals that have been illustrated in this section. Hence, what IBM, Ericsson, and Huawei ultimately sell are non-optional *technologies of life*.

5. Summary of Findings

This study was guided by social constructivist outlooks (e.g. Berger & Luckmann, 1966; Marvin, 1988; Pinch & Bijker, 1984; Williams, 1974), meaning that society and language have been recognised as mutually constitutive. By this token, I have argued that the ways in which ICT corporations represent technology have implications for how we think of, relate to, and practice technology. Researched corporations contribute to the construction of the 'mobility revolution', both discursively and materially. They all propose that media mobility brings a radical break with the past and that life without media is not only unimaginable, but also poor, complicated, and dull. Mediatisation is constructed as the response to an internal *human drive* and as an inexorable *natural force*. Three sub-discourses were identified in the empirical data of this study: 'technologies of cosmos' (cf. Tomlinson, 2008), 'technologies of self' (cf. O'Flynn & Petersen, 2007), and, ultimately, 'technologies of life'. While biased somewhat differently, these sub-discourses all communicate the indispensability of mobile media in modern lives. The 'technologies of cosmos' discourse echoes 'flow-speak' (Bude & Dürrschmidt, 2010) and renders mobile media necessary for social and cultural change on a collective level, whereas the 'technologies of self' discourse presents mobile media as essential for personal growth and self-empowerment (cf. Gill, 2014). The 'technologies of life' discourse is arguably the most extreme one, in that it constructs mobile media as engrained in human life per se and hence completely vital. This latter discourse constructs something close to the posthumanic figure 'the cyborg citizen' (Gray, 2000, p. 20). Altogether, IBM, Huawei, and Ericsson present themselves as the purveyors of a global mobile technotopia where 'everybody' can feel at home. The mobile media they provide are constructed as 'a component of universality' (Poster, 2008) promoting 'global citizenship' (Hand &

Sandywell, 2002, p. 198). This is a kind of globalism discourse that has been successfully upheld for a long time (Poster, 2008, traces it back to the Enlightenment and specifically to Kant's Idea for a *Universal History from a Cosmopolitan Point of View* from 1784).

6. Concluding Discussion

In this concluding section, I shall reflect upon some potential implications on the aggregate technology discourse on social space (Bourdieu, 1977; Lefebvre, 1991) and suggest an agenda for critical media(-tisation) studies that aims to stimulate *interpretive flexibility* (Pinch & Bijker, 1984).

Let us begin by considering the legitimising and reproductive powers of studied corporate technology discourse. This is imperative if we accept that technology discourse both 'reflect and influence the wider political, institutional, social, and legal policies of the culture' (David, 2001, p. 196), and operates ideologically (Fisher, 2010a; Habermas, 1971). In times when *Forbes* magazine writes instructions for how to do 'digital detox' (Goldston, 2018), when entrepreneurs offer '5:2 digital diets', and when concepts like '*counter*-mediatisation' (Jansson, 2018, p. 156, emphasis added) gain momentum, there are indeed reasons to question the legitimacy of celebratory discourse on the 'mobility revolution'. Relatedly, when corporations provide employees with 'workfulness' handbooks (Telenor, 2017), when French students protest against 'flexploitation', and when academics write about the 'tyranny of the mobile phone' (Gregg, 2011, p. 3), we should troubleshoot commemorative accounts of technologies that let us work 'whenever', 'wherever'. If we add to this picture perspectives that recognise media usage *per se* as a form of (free) labour (Fuchs, 2014; Terranova, 2000), then petitions for more digital engagement should be further problematised. As found also by Fisher (2010a), the affinity between new media discourse and the current mode of capitalism is evident. In promoting accelerated, urbanised, always-on-the-move, self-organised lifestyles, corporate technology discourse potentially reinforces (self-)precariousness in both material and perceptive terms and thus serves the interests of capitalism. This in turn corresponds with critical understandings of mediatisation as a *hegemonic force*. As Jansson (2018) argues: 'The need to stay connected, make oneself visible and adapt one's free time and working life to the affordances of media cannot be uncoupled from the political-economic forces of a capitalist consumer society' (p. 155). The hegemonic nature of mediatisation also proves itself in the construction of mobile media users. While global inequality is addressed in the studied texts (as something to be solved by technology; cf. Figure 7), whereas people in economically less prosperous parts of the world do feature in the material (typically as to illustrate the remarkable reach of the 'revolution' or as targets for 'social good' campaigns), and although IBM, Ericsson, and Huawei do seem to strive for ethnic as well as gender diversity in their overall imagery (while no quantitative analysis has been made on my part, I would appreciate the ratio women/men to be more equal than suggested by the illustrations selected for this paper), there is considerably less diversity in terms of *class*. The pervasiveness of white-collar professionals in modern cityscapes is apparent. Potentially, this class bias is connected to the high levels of 'self-entrepreneurial' narratives in the corporate texts. As Gill (2014) finds in her examination of the classed dimensions of entrepreneurial discourse, 'class hierarchy is simultaneously present and erased by entrepreneurialism and other, intersecting discourses' (p. 65). Legitimate entrepreneurship, Gill (2014) concludes, is reserved for 'the creative, experienced, white, professional middle and upper classes' (p. 60). In conclusion then, the glory of mediatisation is sold by way of intended users whose position in social space is already privileged. Again then, we are reminded that the 'universality' promoted by global discourse is not always so widespread after all (cf. Poster, 2008).

Let us continue by reflecting upon the implications of mentioned findings on media(-tisation) research. While the presented study is delimited to an interrogation of the *discursive* construction of mediatisation—how media indispensability is constructed as trope—the question of whether or not media indispensability is *merely* a trope merits attention. Numerous empirical studies imply that media indispensability is more than simply a key selling-point for ICT corporations *and* more than an alluring theoretical figure in mediatisation studies. The media indispensability trope is indeed—also—a reflection of society beyond investor reports and marketing texts. McLuhan's view on media as human extensions, Schulz's (2004) recognition of substitution, amalgamation, accommodation as additional tokens of progressed mediatisation, and Hepp and Couldry's (2016) account of 'deep mediatisation' all suggest that the media do reconfigure social life—as does Jansson's (2014, 2015a, 2015b, 2018) take on mediatisation as 'media indispensability'. Arguably then, there *are* solid grounds for both ICT corporations and academics to cast media technologies as drivers of social change (next to other meta-processes). Against this backdrop, it is understandable that ICT businesses and mediatisation researchers share ontologies—and metaphors. Figures like 'the networked society' (Castells, 1996) or 'global village' (McLuhan, 1964) have—apparently—been readily absorbed by ICT corporations. Conversely, 'cybertarianism' (Miller, 2016) is not exclusive to ICT investor reports, but appears in research literature as well (see Kaplan, 1990). Corporate rhetoric is innovative and the metaphors used are oftentimes alluring. It is therefore not surprising to find it influencing other social domains (David, 2001), research included. However, whilst corporate and research discourse might overlap, our agendas should remain different lest we give up the critical mediatisation studies project. This means, in essence,

that when ICT corporations attempt to bring *rhetorical closure* to the debate by presenting a unified story on mobile media technology, mediatisation research should persistently supply alternative narratives so as to maintain *interpretive flexibility* (Pinch & Bijker, 1984). Such narratives should also involve those agents whose position in social space—the capital poor, the 'peripheral'—does not grant them a place in glossy corporate reports, yet who still—in the perspective of SCOT—partake in the (social construction of) the 'mobility revolution'. Apropos the potential problems with discursive overlaps between corporate and mediatisation discourse: critical mediatisation studies must be careful not to be seduced by the 'classless ethos' (Gill, 2014) signifying contemporary mobile technology discourse. Granted that voices from various 'relevant social groups' are brought in, a *discursive turn* in mediatisation studies is welcome.

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Conflict of Interests

The author declares no conflict of interests.

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Article

Mediatization of Social Space and the Case of Uber Drivers

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Abstract
Digital data have become a form of "objectivation", which affect how we construct social knowledge and organize social space (Couldry & Hepp, 2017). The workplace is one sphere that is increasingly datafied. This study explores how Uber drivers, a form of digitally-enabled service workers, contribute to the normalization of the social production of space through their interpretative practices of digital data in an online forum. Drawing on Uber's corporate discourse and an Uber driver online forum, we analyze two facets of the Uber app and drivers' mediated experiences: (1) the quantification and discipline of drivers' performance through Uber's rating system and (2) the coordination of spatial movement through location-related metrics. We argue that the underlying workings of the Uber app premediate expectations of service encounters and spatial movement. Uber drivers meanwhile develop practices which respond to and circumvent their own data contributions to the system. Drivers' practices, we argue, are largely in compliance with the calculative logics set by Uber. The article addresses implications of Uber drivers' practices for the reproduction of social space and power-relations in digitally-enabled service work and the gig economy.

Keywords
digitally-enabled service work; mediatization; mobile apps; ratings; social space; Uber; work practices

Issue
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1. Introduction

Datafication is the latest wave of mediatization, a wave that is deepening people's connectedness to data-driven infrastructures of communication—or what Couldry and Hepp (2017) call "deep mediatization". The ways that we make sense of reality, construct social knowledge and organize social space are intimately connected to digital data. The workplace is one sphere that is increasingly dataifed: not only do knowledge workers need to work with data and algorithms, but service workers are also increasingly required to interpret and use data in their daily work. The proliferation of digital and mobile technologies has rendered a variety of labor in the global digital economy—from data-entry workers to electronic workers to unpaid consumption labor—largely low paid or unpaid and invisible (Dyer-Witheford, 2015; Huws, 2014; Scholz, 2017). The expansion of gig economy is part of this broader context: inequality and precarity are deeply embedded in the gig economy (Chen, 2017; Schor & Attwood-Charles, 2017; van Doorn, 2017). Against the backdrop of datafication and the gig economy, this study takes Uber as a case to explore how Uber drivers interpret the data generated through Uber mobile application (app) to mediate power-relations between the company, drivers, and riders. We use the term "digitally-enabled service workers" to refer to workers who interact with consumers virtually before meeting in the physical space. Like taxi drivers (Anderson, 2014; Davis, 1959) and other traditional service workers (Leidner, 1999), digitally-enabled service workers need to evaluate interactional contexts, and thus manage emotional dis-

plays during service encounters. Scholars have studied the power-relations between service workers and consumers (e.g., Leidner, 1999; Lopez, 2010) and the instrumentality and socio-economic forces of performing affective or emotional labor (e.g., Duffy, 2016; Gregg, 2010; Hearn, 2010; Hochschild, 1983). Yet, central to the notion of digitally-enabled service workers is the temporal ordering of social interactions. The temporality is essential to the mediatization of social space in two important respects. First, data set expectations of social interactions. Second, data as a kind of social stock of knowledge (Couldry & Hepp, 2017) may exercise control over drivers' work practices, whereas drivers may also develop practices to negotiate what counts as relevant "knowledge" in the gig economy.

An investigation into how Uber drivers interpret data helps to understand the production of social space because people access and use the Uber app with their mobile phones in the public space. We draw on Jansson's (2013) framework of mediatization and social space to explore the "transmedia textures" of Uber from the drivers' perspective. Echoing Humphreys' (2012) observations of mobile social networks, the use of Uber app connects drivers with riders who are not physically present, coordinates users' spatial movement, and catalogues metaspatial information about users of the app. As such, Uber drivers become a node within physical and datafied space. Uber drivers interact with riders in physical space and data generated through the app by continually sharing personal and locational information with other users and the company. Digital data and associated algorithms are socially constructed artifacts (Gillespie, 2014) that are built into drivers' work practices.

While much research has examined the governance by digital data in the workplace (e.g., Rosenblat & Stark, 2016) and the ways that knowledge workers respond to dataifcation (e.g., Christin, 2017), this study explores digitally-enabled service workers' interpretative practice of data. Here, interpretative practice means the ways that Uber drivers articulate norms guiding their peers in engaging with data on an online forum where they build communication networks (Rosenblat, 2018). Such practices can contribute to the normalization of the social production of space (Jansson, 2013). We scrutinize how Uber's corporate discourse and Uber drivers' practices of knowledge sharing ascribe meanings to the data concerning physical space and their social interactions therein. This case study affords significant opportunities for thinking about the digitally-enabled service workers' labor experience and the socio-technical context where they interact with the platform, the company, and riders.

2. Literature Review

2.1. Mediatization and Social Space

Theoretically, we explore how Uber contributes to the production of social space. Jansson's (2013) framework on the mediatization of social space is especially helpful in conceptualizing Uber and the mediatization of social space. He uses Lefebvre's (1991) triadic understanding for social space, that is, space is produced through perception, conception, and lived practice. Jansson (2013) mediatizes this triadic frame to account for the contemporary transmedia environment we live in today. He argues that perceived space "directs our attention towards the more material, sensuous dimensions of the media" (p. 282), that is, in a transmedia world, perceived space takes on material indispensability and adaptation. Within the context of this study, we will examine how Uber drivers perceive space through their interactions with the Uber app. According to Jansson, conceived space can be best understood through the premediation of experience and expectations. This suggests an attention to the ways that the experience of space is premediated for drivers (as well as riders). Important to Lefebvre's notion of conceived space are power differentials. That is, some actors have more power than others in defining and shaping what space is and how it is used (Harvey, 1990). For example, Uber has its own navigation system that is directly embedded within the Uber driver app. This navigation system is an example of the kinds of premediated, conceived spaces which are essential to the infrastructure of Uber as both an app and a company. It essentially premediates the coordination of driver and rider such that one must use the app to summon a driver.

Lastly, and of great relevance to this article, is Jansson's (2013) normalization of social practice. Most similar to Lefebvre's (1991) lived experience, this concept helps to understand how Uber drivers seek to influence the production of space through their appropriation of Uber app, its various features and various other media used in concert. Jansson draws our attention to the *normalization* of social practice, that is, how space is produced through the "norms, conventions and expectations" of everyday life (2013, p. 285). Therefore, to study not just spatial practice, but it's normalization, we empirically examine as one of our data sources an online drivers' forum where such normalization is explicitly articulated rather than inferred from ethnographic observation.

The question of the mediatization of social space within the case of Uber requires not only definitions of what we mean social space but mechanisms within mediatization that more specifically contribute to the study of Uber. In this case, datafication.

2.2. The Politics of Data

Data and associated algorithms can be inherently political artifacts because they can produce and objectify certain logics of social knowledge (Couldry & Hepp, 2017; Gillespie, 2014). Gillespie (2014) has argued algorithms evaluate and recommend "relevant" information to the users, based on their implicit assumptions and values about what counts as "legitimate" knowledge. Because algorithms cannot achieve its ends without users' prac-

tices, we should examine the "entanglement between algorithms put into practice and the social tactics of users who take them up" in broader socio-technical contexts (Gillespie, 2014, p. 183). An examination of entanglement with practice has to do with the interpretative agency of users in negotiating meanings of data. Couldry and Hepp (2017) have explicated that datafication is an emerging wave of mediatization because data become a form of "objectivation" that affects how we construct social reality, though people may not be aware of the automated processes of classifying and categorizing the data. They argue data can be translated into social practices through the organization of social space, time, self, collectivities, and social order.

This study focuses on the intersection of data and social production of space. The Uber app not only categorizes and segregates physical space through algorithms but also becomes the means to coordinate drivers' and riders' spatial movement, trace their spatially relevant information, and encounter other users. Uber's rating system also produces "calculated publics" (Gillespie, 2014) by categorizing drivers and riders into different groups on a five-star scale. As such, the data generated via Uber app, which embody Uber's implicit assumptions about social knowledge, may affect drivers' interpretation of space and interactions therein. But Uber drivers must consider how they react to data. Do they consider the data as a form of social knowledge that shapes their interpretation of physical space and social interactions with riders? How do drivers interpret the data for their purposes? This study may provide a glimpse of these issues and contribute to the literature on the mediatization of social space.

2.3. Datafication of the Workplace and Workers' Autonomy

The datafication of the workplace involves processes through which employers and workers negotiate what counts as "knowledge" in making work-related decisions (Stark, 2009). Braverman (1974) has highlighted a complex relationship between workers' skills, knowledge, job autonomy and managerial control. Managerial control is executed through the abstraction of and "monopoly over knowledge" (Braverman, 1974, p. 82). This form of control concentrates the ownership of production knowledge in the hands of employers and excludes workers from this process. Braverman's work offers precious insights into the labor power of knowledge and the dynamics of control and resistance. Recently, corporations deploy data-driven technologies to restructure labor process through the abstraction of data and knowledge (Levy, 2015). Therefore, an investigation into the relationship between labor process and datafication as knowledge production can help to understand power dynamics in the digital economy.

Existing research largely have examined how knowledge workers—for example, journalists (Anderson, 2011; Carlson, 2017; Christin, 2017), legal experts (Christin, 2017), medical professionals (Maiers, 2017) and educators (Sauder & Espeland, 2009)—respond to the institutional demand for algorithmic decision-making. An underlying premise is that algorithms can make more "objective" and "rational" judgment that humans, from the management's perspective (Carlson, 2017; Christin, 2017). Data become a form of quantifiable knowledge that may change workers' decision-making process. For instance, managers ask journalists to make news decisions based on web traffic statistics (Anderson, 2011) and use algorithms to produce, prioritize, and recommend news to their readers (Carlson, 2017). Yet, there are discrepancies between organizational policies and workers' actual practices. Christin (2017) found that journalists and legal professionals develop buffering strategies to resist such technologies. The workers may simply ignore the metrics generated by the technologies, selectively manipulate the data for their goals, and criticize the validity of the data.

Organizational culture and professional agency can affect how people interpret data and knowledge within their professions. For example, Maiers (2017) found a tension between quantifiable metrics created by Horizon, a data-driven medical technology, and clinicians' tacit knowledge. Although clinicians recognize the value of Horizon, they do not take the data as the only legitimate knowledge. Rather, they may engage in "conditioned reading", by tracking both the data and other indicators of patient health in the decision-making process. "Conditioned reading" of data is possible in organizational contexts which recognize the agency of workers to draw on their expertise. As such, knowledge workers' professional expertise becomes a vital source of job autonomy.

White collar workers, however, may be very different from low-wage service workers in labor conditions and experiences. Employers reportedly discipline low-wage workers through a system of scientific management (Ball, 2010; Braverman, 1974), refractive surveillance (Levy & Barocas, 2018) and automated surveillance (Levy, 2015; Moore, Upchurch, & Whittaker, 2018; Rosenblat & Stark, 2016). For example, Levy (2015) found that truck firms used real-time fleet management systems to create abstract data streams to constantly monitor drivers' work schedule, geolocation, and duty status. Such managerial practice considered truck drivers as a mere data point in the technological system, thus allowing the management to control workers' spatial movement in time. Hence, low-wage service workers have limited job autonomy (van Doorn, 2017). This raises the questions of how service workers may imagine and respond to the datafication.

We argue that Braverman's (1974) discussion of managerial control as the abstraction and monopoly of knowledge is particularly relevant to datafication, labor process and power dynamics in service work. Recent studies have complicated the emotional labor process by recognizing the labor subjectivity and struggles to

perform emotion work contingent upon organizational and situational demands and worker-consumer relationship in service work (Bolton, 2010; Lopez, 2010). In the context of Uber, we should consider who has more power to define the norms of service interactions. Additionally, Levy and Barocas (2018) have developed the framework of refractive surveillance to situate consumer surveillance and worker control relationally, particularly in the low-wage retail workplace. Corporations deploy consumer data, such as customer in-store experiences, to make decisions as to the management of employees work hours and scheduling. It helps to understand how Uber's consumer-sourced rating system may exercise power over drivers. Drawing insights from these studies, we examine how digital data shape Uber drivers' interpretative practices and the labor process in the age of deep mediatization.

2.4. Uber Drivers in the Gig Economy

Over the last decade, there has been a skyrocketing growth of the so-called "gig" or "sharing" economy that deploys algorithmic technologies to manage and organize work (Scholz, 2017). The on-demand platforms, such as Uber, consider both service providers and consumers as users of their services, which allow the companies to distance themselves from an employment relationship with service providers (e.g., Uber drivers) and associated obligations (van Doorn, 2017). The construction of platforms may also aggravate class, racial and gender inequalities during service encounters (Schor & Attwood-Charles, 2017) and result in workplace discrimination (Rosenblat, Levy, Barocas, & Hwang, 2017). Situating in the wider context of precarious workforce, the gig economy can be seen "an opportunity to increase labor control while externalizing risks onto contractors and customers" (Schor & Attwood-Charles, 2017, p. 7). Similarly, Fleming (2017) has argued that there is a "radical responsibilization" of work, which is intimately connected with neoliberal discourse that emphasizes individual responsibility and choice. The discourse may normalize gig workers' precarious experiences. Moreover, despite the platform owners' glamorization of flexibility of gig workers, workers are subject to expansive socio-technical control (van Doorn, 2017) through information asymmetries (Rosenblat & Stark, 2016; Shapiro, 2017). The platforms can create information asymmetries through selective display of relevant work-related information. In a study of on-demand courier services, Shapiro (2017) found that the companies remove locational information in the app interface, which delimits gig workers' abilities to decide whether to accept job orders. Yet, Shapiro notes that gig workers' intuitions and experiences might affect their interpretation of data in making decisions. Therefore, it is crucial to understand how gig workers may normalize and entangle with the calculative logics of algorithms.

Studies on Uber drivers have extended critiques of labor practices in the gig economy, by examining how Uber app may facilitate automated algorithmic management of labor (Gloss, McGregor, & Brown, 2016; Lee, Kusbit, Metsky, & Dabbish, 2015; Rosenblat & Stark, 2016). The app's navigation and rating systems enable constant surveillance of drivers. Because the potentially biased ratings determine drivers' employment opportunities (Rosenblat et al., 2017), the rating system lead drivers to perform emotional labor for an exchange of a good rating (Gloss et al., 2016; Raval & Dourish, 2016; Rosenblat & Stark, 2016). Due to the information asymmetries between the company and drivers, drivers often expressed frustration with the data generated via Uber app, which necessitate learning how to interpret such data (Gloss et al., 2016; Malin & Chandler, 2017; Raval & Dourish, 2016; Rosenblat & Stark, 2016).

These studies provide valuable insights into the labor control and practices in the gig economy and the governing role of Uber app, but few of them explicated how the service encounters are mediatizated through the datafication of drivers' performance and physical location. Therefore, we examine how drivers articulate norms of interpreting the data generated via Uber app to construct social space and shape interactions between drivers, riders, and the platform itself.

3. Research Context and Methods

Uber, founded in 2009, is one of the largest ride-hailing service companies. In 2017, there were 3 million active drivers globally (Bhuiyan, 2018). Using Uber app, Uber drivers can provide ride-hailing services to other users who request a ride. The app monitors users' locations and performance metrics in real-time contexts. Echoing Bowker and Star's (1999) discussion of classification systems, we argue that the data generated and exhibited through the app are always incomplete and conduct invisible work to organize drivers' work in social space. This study focuses on two facets of drivers' mediated experiences, namely the rating system and the navigation system.

Methodologically, the construction of algorithmic systems is largely black boxed because platform owners prohibit individuals from accessing the design process and the algorithms are always evolving. A discursive analysis of platform owner' documents and different actors' interpretative practices is a useful strategy to understand algorithmic systems (Kitchin, 2017). Specifically, the materials presented in this article draw on (1) Uber's website and (2) online forum for Uber drivers. We analyzed the company documents concerning the rating system and navigation system to understand how Uber has framed the two systems and intended users' action. We also draw on UberPeople, one of the largest online Uber driver forums. By December 2017, the online forum had about 110,000 members and 198,000 discussion posts, where drivers discuss the strategies for economic success. We do not intend to generalize drivers' practices of knowledge sharing on this forum to the ac-

tual work practices of the whole population of Uber drivers. Yet, because the forum represents a place where drivers share work-related knowledge (Rosenblat, 2018), our analysis of the forum discussion may reveal how some drivers articulate norms and expectations of digital data through their practices of sharing peer-to-peer knowledge. We conducted a purposive sampling (Coyne, 1997) of discussion threads, specifically focusing on two of the thirteen main discussions threads on the site: "Ratings" and "Advice". We analyzed the most-viewed post on the "Ratings" thread (i.e., more than 100,000 views) to explore how drivers interpret and manage the rating system. Within "Advice", we examined the "Beginner Advice" posted by the moderator of this forum, which may help us to understand how drivers articulate their knowledge about the data with other drivers. A comparison between Uber's documents and drivers' posts reveals discrepancies between Uber's policy and drivers' interpretative practices as well as the negotiation of legitimate knowledge around service encounters.

4. The Management of an "Imperfect" System

As an algorithmic labor management system (Rosenblat & Stark, 2016), Uber app is an "imperfect" system because it can never fully control drivers' performance. Based on the materials we collected, Uber and drivers negotiate the meanings of the data generated via the rating system and the aggregated location-related metrics. There are two recurrent themes surrounding the use of Uber app and datafication: (1) the quantification and discipline of drivers' performance and (2) the coordination of spatial movement. Examples within each theme demonstrate how the digital data mediate the social production of space and the power-relations between Uber and drivers.

4.1. The Quantification and Discipline of Drivers' Performance

Uber's rating system allows drivers and riders to evaluate one another's performance after each trip on a generic 5-point star system. One's overall rating is an average of the ratings she or he got from the last 500 trips. Uber drivers are required to rate riders' performance after each trip, whereas riders can decide whether they rate their drivers. The consumer-sourced rating system offers a mechanism for Uber to measure drivers' performance and legitimize their decisions on who can continue working on the platform. However, Uber enforces a stricter regulation on drivers than riders because Uber does not deactivate riders' account even they get a poor rating.

Uber's rating system can be seen as disciplinary practices that exercise power through surveillance and normalization (Sauder & Espeland, 2009). Uber not only continuously monitors drivers' performance through the real-time rating system (Rosenblat & Stark, 2016) but also disciplines drivers to keep track of their quantified performance. The rating system normalizes such discipline by standardizing the "ideal" ride-hailing experiences and creating the normative hierarchy (Sauder & Espeland, 2009). The rating system situates drivers' performance relationally: a driver's rating reflects not only one's performance but also the extent to which one's performance conforms to the standard norms of "ideal" performance held by other drivers. Because the meanings of one's numeric star rating are abstract, Uber sent a guide to the drivers to explain the methods of calculating ratings, the goals of using the rating system, and strategies for getting a good rating in 2014. This official guide documents how drivers should perform during the ride. The guide explained, "Your [drivers'] average rating is the first thing that Uber uses when evaluating your [drivers'] partnership and the system" (Uber, 2014, p. 2). Uber may deactivate the "lowest-quality drivers" to protect "the quality of the Uber system as a whole" and ensure that riders can enjoy an efficient and safe ride-hailing service (Uber, 2014, p. 3). This document also provides some guidelines for getting a high rating. Specifically, drivers should "offer riders bottled water, snacks, gum, and cell phone chargers" and have a clean car (Uber, 2014, p. 8). The drivers should also perform emotional labor by dressing professionally and being "friendly and positive, regardless of the rider's attitude" (Uber, 2014, p. 10). In 2017, Uber's website included these suggestions and added that drivers should "keep the conversation polite, professional, and respectful" and be "sociable" (Uber Help, 2017).

Uber's suggestions are relevant to the mediatization of social interactions through datafication. The aggregated consumer-sourced ratings become the mediated knowledge that provides personalized recommendations to drivers and Uber about drivers' work performance. Because drivers' rating determines their employment opportunities, they have to discipline their performance to get high ratings. The Uber's guideline also envisions that drivers' interactions with riders should facilitate an efficient, safe, and communal trip. The rating system thus becomes a form of "feeling rules" (Hochschild, 1983; Leidner, 1999) that standardize and control how drivers should interact with riders in both mediated and face-to-face communication. The system also structures drivers' feelings and monetizes affective relationships into a form of digital reputation (Hearn, 2010). The instrumentality of affective relationships is not new; for example, taxi drivers have long managed their affective relationships with passengers to solicit tips (Davis, 1959). The difference is that Uber possesses much more information about service encounters than drivers and can use the information to script drivers' performance through the deployment of data-driven technologies (Levy, 2015). Hence, drivers have limited degree of autonomy in deciding their performance during service encounters.

Indeed, Uber drivers may socialize themselves to the standard created by Uber's rating system. On UberPeople, there are heated discussions on the tactics of get-

ting a good rating. Participants consider drivers as vulnerable subjects because riders can unreasonably give them a low rating and there is no formal procedure for drivers to complain about the ratings. The uncertainty and anxiety created by the rating system are related to the data's disciplinary power because drivers have limited power to manage the evaluative process (Sauder & Espeland, 2009). Thus, drivers attempt to comply with the expectations created by the system. Specifically, some participants recommended others to follow Uber's suggestions to dress professionally and learn how to communicate with riders in a friendly way. In a discussion post with more than 600 replies, participants suggested that "if there are more than one passenger in the car, be sure to engage them all equally in conversation". When more than one rider enters the car, drivers cannot know who will be rating them. Engaging all passengers mitigates this uncertainty. Drivers should also know when they should be "quiet" or "chatty" by observing riders' performance and body language. It also means that drivers should not talk about sensitive topics such as politics because it may negatively affect the rating. Like Uber's suggestions, participants recommended that drivers should offer bottled water and phone chargers to riders. These suggestions may normalize the meanings Uber scripts into its rating system; that is, drivers conform to the algorithmic power by learning to be "professional" and "sociable" service workers.

Unlike professional workers (Christin, 2017), drivers work in a highly constrained environment where they cannot simply ignore data and have limited autonomy to interpret data. The forum provides drivers with an opportunity to denounce the limited transparency and unfairness of Uber's rating system. On UberPeople, participants suggested that there are various reasons for a poor rating, based on their work experience. They explained that young people, nighttime riders, and the drunk are more likely to give low ratings. The working time and locations are vital to their ratings because if drivers mostly work in a "party city at night", they tend to get a poor rating. One participant stated:

> I intend to be a full driver and make a lot of money for this company and don't feel drivers should have to live in fear of losing an account over the actions of the intoxicated. Please look at the rating system and allow it to give us a chance to grow rather than live in fear.

The consequence of getting a poor rating is the prohibition of working on Uber. The rating system thus datafies the social interaction as well as the physical vehicular space, which can contribute to a drivers' perpetual state of fear. Because drivers cannot continue working through Uber if their rating is below about 4.6/5.0, one to four stars is regarded as failing grade. Drivers contended that Uber should educate riders about the rating system. Other drivers stated that the rating system is potentially biased because the system elevates riders' evaluation over drivers' unique work experiences. Yet, riders may have implicit biases when they evaluate drivers' performance; for example, they may tend to give a low rating if the driver already has a poor rating. The imperfect navigation system can also result in an unsatisfactory rating. Because drivers do not control the rating system by which they are evaluated, forum participants closely attend to the details of the system. This in turn reveals how they internalize the system as a form of discipline.

Another strategy of managing the rating system is "gaming", which is defined as "cynical efforts to manipulate the rankings data without addressing the underlying condition that is the target of measurement" (Sauder & Espeland, 2009, p. 76). For Uber drivers, a gaming strategy is not accepting certain riders' request, based on riders' location and performance metrics. When drivers receive a ride request, the app will show the time distance between drivers' location and the pick-up location. Participants on UberPeople proposed that drivers should not accept a ride that is more than eight minutes away from their current location because when riders wait for a long time, they are more likely to rate the drivers low. Moreover, forum participants contended that drivers should not accept riders with a rating below 4.7/5.0 because these riders are usually "troublesome" and less likely to tip the drivers. Uber never suggests that drivers can select a rider based on the ratings or location-related data. Yet, drivers appropriate the system to protect their employment opportunities. Although drivers are vocal in their criticism of the rating system, they nevertheless legitimize the system by ascribing social meanings (e.g., troublesome) to riders with a substandard rating. In all, the rating system becomes a datafied form of discipline that shapes how drivers interact with the platform and riders. Simultaneously drivers develop interpretative practices that utilize the data to sustain their livelihood.

4.2. The Coordination of Spatial Movement

One common way for drivers to use the Uber app to connect with place was to use the navigation system. The app includes the GPS navigation system, but drivers can also use other systems to navigate their route such as Google Maps. The navigation system not only is a representation of the city but also creates premediated socio-spatial relations between drivers and riders. As Uber claims, "navigation means more than just getting from point A to point B. For example, upon arriving at a pickup point, drivers then have to find their riders—right down to what side of the street they're on" (Uber Newsroom, 2017). Participants on UberPeople stated that riders might give a low rating to the driver who has a bad navigation, though Uber has recently attempted to address this issue. From drivers' perspective, there are various reasons that can affect the accuracy of the navigation system. One example is the driver's physical location:

drivers may have inaccurate GPS signals when driving in the central business district or through tunnels. Hence, participants suggested that drivers should have knowledge about the city and only drive in the places where they are familiar with, as they cannot always rely on the navigation system. Additionally, one major intent for drivers to use the navigation system is to communicate and coordinate with riders. This coordination process involves riders' input of the pick-up location. Nonetheless, participants found that riders might not enter the most accurate address, especially in the central business district or places with multiple entrances. The "Beginner Advice" on the forum made a distinction between "safe" and "unsafe" places when discussing the navigation system. The "safe" places mean the location that can easily identify the rider and stop the car, whereas examples of "unsafe" places include the places located at the major intersection with traffic congestion. To manage the imperfect navigation system, drivers did turn urban spaces into meaningful places where they meet riders.

Another set of practices concerns the surge pricing feature. This shows "real-time" demand and supply of ride-hailing services in the city and determines when drivers can get higher ride rates due to higher demand. By offering higher rates to drivers working in the surge area, the mediated location awareness encourages drivers to work in particular places with high demand. Rosenblat and Stark (2016) have argued that surge pricing shows the inaccurate predictive demand of the services, which can undermine drivers' autonomy. On the forum, drivers noted that surge price is based on riders' rather than drivers' location. Even when the drivers' app shows surge pricing, drivers need to pay attention to the pop-up notification regarding the particular ride request because only that notification will determine the actual ride rate. Therefore, some participants suggested that drivers should ignore the surge pricing because "surges last for minutes and there is no guarantee to get a surge job". Some even complaining that "Uber creates fake surges".

Moreover, drivers tried to leverage the data from the surge pricing maps for their benefit. For example, drivers could attend to the major events in the city such as concerts to predict and identify the surge zone before the app shows the increased surge pricing. As one blogger explained:

> What I found that works best is to stay at the outskirts of the surge zone or to identify a secondary surge zone….What I found was that I lost a lot of time looking for riders, and then I would have to cancel. By that time, the surge was over and now I just lost time and money at this big event. A better strategy is to go a little before the event is over and after the big crowd is gone. It is easier to move in and out of the area and you can get multiple rides as opposed to one big ride. Once the surge is gone, I go back to the area because some people hang out at the bars until they close. (Castillo, 2017)

Overall, drivers recommended acquiring knowledge about the city (e.g., the location and time of the major events) if they want to utilize the surge pricing to maximize profit. However, distrust in the mapping system, again, reveals the complex ways drivers must manage digital data in their service work.

4.3. Summary and Discussion of the Findings

Grounded in the premise that "automated processes of data-processing are deeply embedded in" Uber drivers' daily work (Couldry & Hepp, 2017, p. 126), we argue the Uber app contributes to the mediatization of social space in several important ways. Algorithms construct a basis for decision-making, often based on the seemingly "neutral" adaptive statistical techniques that classify the relationship between digital data and users' feedback and structure the circulation of information (Rieder, 2017). Although our goal is not to study the underlying statistical practices that the Uber app relies upon, it is vital to note that the selection of certain calculative procedures and the ways of classifying data are deeply social decisions. We suggest that the underlying workings of the app premediate expectations of service encounters, particularly the ways that drivers and riders should perform. We have offered a preliminary assessment of Uber's discourse and drivers' practices surrounding the rating system and location-related metrics. Because of the navigation system and surge pricing, drivers develop practices which respond to and circumvent their own data contributions to the system. The sharing of such practices on UberPeople contributes to the normalization of the social production of space.

Based on an analysis of UberPeople, we argue Uber drivers have a distinct algorithmic imaginary, that is, "ways of thinking about what algorithms are, what they should be, how they function, and what these imaginations in turn make possible" (Bucker, 2017, p. 40). Our use of the term "imaginary" aims to highlight digital data are internalized and forms part of drivers' understanding of the repertoire of everyday work practices. Uber drivers are aware that digital data, such as their ratings, can affect their employment opportunities. Therefore, drivers mobilize their algorithmic imaginary to criticize the opaque methods of calculating and using the performance metrics and location-related data. They nonetheless have limited ability to change the system, due to the information and power asymmetries between the company and drivers. Workers may learn to negotiate with algorithmic labor management, as they familiarize with the app (Shapiro, 2017). On UberPeople, drivers develop strategies to adapt their work practices to the available data to keep their jobs and maximize their earnings. Drivers also attempt to validate riders' performance through quantifiable metrics, though they meanwhile denounce the inaccuracy of the rating system. In other words, drivers take digital data as a kind of social knowledge and normalize the idea that they have to learn to live with digital data.

There are tensions between Uber's discourse and drivers' practices surrounding the Uber app, which contribute to the mediatization of social space and interactions therein. Uber's discourse regards the data generated through the navigation and rating systems as "objective" knowledge that helps drivers to make informed decisions. The location-related metrics, including the data generated via the navigation system and surge pricing, not only signify the location of drivers but also visualize where riders are. The digital map is thus a representation of the city, based on the algorithmic calculation of the consumer demand. The Uber app becomes a datafied space that provides work-related knowledge about the city and enables social coordination across "calculated" spaces. Yet, the accuracy of the navigation system is determined by drivers' physical location. Therefore, drivers need to manage the imperfect system by acquiring the knowledge about the city and attaching meanings, such as familiarity and safety, to physical locations where they drive. In other words, the premediation of drivers' experiences, the material indispensability of the app itself, and the normalization of drivers' social practice converge to produce social space in a datafied and mediatized world.

Additionally, the rating system is an imperfect system that standardizes drivers' service interactions and ride-hailing experiences. While Uber attempts to control drivers' work performance, drivers simultaneously develop their norms of interpreting the ratings through practices of knowledge sharing on the forum. This is not to suggest that drivers' practices are resistance to Uber's managerial control, but to demonstrate how drivers may normalize the managerial control and develop reactive strategies to evade punishment. To qualify as an act of resistance, the resister's intention of undermining power-relations should be recognized by the opposition and bystanders (Hollander & Einwohner, 2004). In this case, drivers' interpretative practices are largely in compliance with the calculative logics established by Uber. Nonetheless, we highlight the interpretative flexibility (Pinch & Bijker, 1984) of the rating system by attending to how Uber and drivers ascribe meanings to the system. The rating system carries not only managerial control over the drivers but also drivers' interpretation of riders. The tensions outlined above suggest that digitally-enabled service work, analogous to expert fields (Christin, 2017), is a complex avenue where managerial discourses and workers' actual practices may differ with one another.

Our preliminary assessments of the management of the imperfect system can provide insights into the politics of data. In the workplace, digital data and associated algorithmic systems embody the management's prescriptive assumptions about the "relevant" knowledge (Gillespie, 2014), but they can never fulfill all the needs of workers. From workers' perspective, digital data as social knowledge are always imperfect yet can be used to help manage risk. By attending to workers' practices that manage such imperfectness, we may be able to the power dynamics mediated by data.

5. Conclusion

This study makes three contributions to the literature around datafication of the workplace. First, by exploring how Uber drivers interpret the performance and location-related metrics, we demonstrate how digital data can construct and set expectations for social interactions. In the wave of datafication, data constitute media space of social contestation (Couldry & Hepp, 2017). Our study shows that the Uber drivers negotiate with the premediation of spatial experience and articulate norms of social interaction in the datafied space. Second, we highlight that digitally-enabled service work is a vital site of encountering and contesting the datafication. Recent studies have drawn our attention to the importance of "context" when considering the presumed and actual impacts of algorithms (Bucker, 2017; Christin, 2017). We suggest the term *digitally-enabled service workers* to better incorporate the processes through which digital data set service workers' expectations of social interactions and mediate the power dynamics in service work. In keeping with previous research (Rosenblat & Stark, 2016), we find that Uber deploys information asymmetries to delimit drivers' decision-making capabilities. Drivers develop a distinct algorithmic imaginary based on the calculative logics of digital data and their peer-to-peer knowledge about the app and work experiences. Uber drivers are just one group of gig workers in the precarious and datafied workforce. Further research should explore how organizational and social differences between professional workers and service workers shape their algorithmic imaginaries and the power-relations in the workplace. Moreover, it is possible that forum participants are more familiar with the Uber app than others. Future studies should explicate whether drivers' interpretative practices around digital data vary in their skills and socio-cultural background. Third, extending critiques over labor practices in the gig economy (Chen, 2017; Rosenblat & Stark, 2016; van Doorn, 2017), this study highlights how data become a form of social knowledge that can favor the company to concentrate the ownership of actionable information and exercise power over workers. Though drivers' reactive strategies are far from resistance to Uber's managerial control, the online forum seems to represent a potential place for workers to create and circulate "worker-generated knowledge" (Chen, 2017) that may empower drivers to make their work experiences visible and cultivate their own workplace culture (Rosenblat, 2018). While the on-demand business model "currently dominates corporate 'future of work' imaginaries" (van Doorn, 2017, p. 908), it is vital to explore how workers can possibly counteract algorithmic power of corporate platforms and build a socially fairer digital economy (e.g., platform cooperativism, see Scholz, 2017). There are signs that some gig workers engage in digital activism that resists platform algorithms (e.g., Chen, 2017). Future work should examine workers' contingent labor conditions in different forms of gig

work and broader socio-technical contexts that can empower workers.

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Conflict of Interests

The authors declare no conflict of interests.

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Article

Sensorial Organization as an Ethics of Space: Digital Media in Everyday Life

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Abstract
This article outlines an analysis of the ethical organization of digital media and social and individual space in everyday life. This is made from a perspective of an 'ethics of the ordinary', highlighting the mundane negotiations and practices conducted to maintain a 'good life' with the media. The analysis shows a sensorial organization of space is conducted in relation to social space, as well as individually. The interviewees use facilities provided by media technologies in order to organize space, as well as organize their media devices spatially in order to construct space for specific purposes, and maintain a good life. These results call for a deepened analysis of the sensorial dimensions of everyday space, in order to understand the ethical struggles of a life with digital media. It is important to include the full spectrum of sensorial experiences in our approach to everyday life and to take the sensorial experiences of ordinary media users into account in our analysis of space as part of an everyday ethics.

Keywords
digital media; ethics; everyday life; phenomenology; sensorial; space

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1. Introduction

Media technologies are increasingly entangled in everyday life (Couldry & Hepp, 2016; Deuze, 2012; Jansson, 2013) and many mundane practices have gradually become dependent on media technologies. How we live with media is in its deepest sense a question of ethics (Couldry, 2006), relating to how we organize our lives with technologies. But how do ordinary media users negotiate what they understand as a good life with the media? How are the ethical dimensions of digital culture practiced on a daily basis, entangled with the myriad of temporalities, spatialities, and materialities constituting everyday life? In this article I address the use of media technologies in everyday life as an ethical organization of space.

My argument in this article follows from an analysis of how people appropriate and organize space individually and socially in order to negotiate the dependencies and affordances that are part of digital culture. Firstly I present an analysis of the sensorial organization of digital media that is maintained in order to control and construct space for individual and social purposes in everyday life. Secondly, I call for a developed analysis of the embodied and sensorial dimensions of media technologies in order to understand the ethical practices and performances of life in digital culture. Given the character and fast development of digital technologies it is important to include the full spectrum of sensorial experiences when understanding the way we live with technologies in everyday life. In this we need a materialist and bodily phenomenology in line with that of Merleau-Ponty (1962).

2. Understanding Ethics of Everyday Life through the Organization of Social Space

Earlier analyses of media in everyday life have revealed the ethical dimensions of its spatial organization (Bengtsson, 2006). The larger and often stationary analogue media devices; television, radio, telephones, etc., had their permanent positions in specific places in the home and were thus involved in constructing symbolic spaces in the home environment; invisible borders between work space, leisure space, social space and space for solitude,

etc. Today, mobile and portable digital media do not provide media users with the same possibilities for a neat material organization of space, in the home, at work or school, in social situations etc., since they are 'always on you' (Turkle, 2008), and thus increasingly entangled in various dimensions of human practice.

The current saturation of media in various dimensions of human lives has been discussed as part of the mediatization of culture and everyday life (Couldry & Hepp, 2016). André Jansson (2013, p. 281) has argued the process of mediatization contains important spatial dimensions and suggests we think of the current state of mediatization in terms of sociospatial regimes of dependence. These regimes include 1) material indispensability and adaptation, 2) premediation of experience and 3) normalization of social practice. The first and the third dimension are the most important ones here, the first mainly as vantage point; we know from earlier research that media technologies are immersing into growing areas of everyday practices such as searching, choosing, socializing, dating, etc. (cf. Couldry & Hepp, 2016; Deuze, 2012). The third dimension, however, guides the empirical analysis. Following Lefebvre's understanding of space through its focus upon the material attributes that are produced through social activity (1974/1991, pp. 38ff.), I am concerned with the spatial organization of media practices and the ethical dimensions within them.

My theoretical approach is informed by a Foucauldian notion of ethics, building upon an antique, or Aristotelian, understanding of it (Foucault, Rabinow, & Hurley, 1997). Ethics in the classic period was closely linked to cultivation, and was mainly related to one's relation to oneself, although it was also a social practice (Foucault, 1986; Foucault et al., 1997, p. 266). Ethos was 'a way of being and about behavior…a mode of being for the subject along with a certain way of acting, a way visible to others' (Foucault et al., 1997, p. 286). To care for oneself was both a privilege and a duty that guaranteed freedom by forcing individuals to diligently make themselves their own objects of life (Foucault et al., 1997). As part of the 'ethical turn' within anthropology (Brown, 2016; Zigon, 2007), the Foucauldian approach to ethics has been conceptualized as 'an ethics of the ordinary' (Faubion, 2011; Lambek, 2010).

An ethics of the ordinary builds upon a belief that ethics cannot be found in abstract principles or criteria, as ethics is rarely considered or consciously thought about, if at all, but should be searched for in people's negotiations, articulations and everyday practices (Zigon, 2007). This means ethics is 'tacit, grounded in agreement rather than rule, in practice rather than knowledge or belief, and happening without calling undue attention to itself' (Lambek, 2010, p. 2). Such an approach to ethics is particularly useful in relation to a mediatized everyday life, as the complex structure of media and society today is increasingly difficult to grasp for ordinary users, perhaps even leading to a 'moral blindness' (Bauman & Donskis, 2013), and as the adaptation to and indispensability of digital media means profound transformations of social practice (Jansson, 2013). Our understanding of the current media culture may thus benefit from searching for ethics in the underlying values and virtues implicit in people's deeds and doings, feelings and emotions, rather than in pre-formulated principles and rational guidelines.

Foucault distinguished four dimensions of the care of the self; 1) Ethical substance; 2) Mode of subjectivity; 3) Techne, and 4) Telos (Foucault et al., 1997, pp. 262–269). I here focus upon the third dimension; techne; the *self-forming activities* that people conduct in order to cultivate themselves as ethical beings. Techne relates to the body, and economic as well as social relations (Foucault et al., 1997), but here it includes all the things people do in relation to digital media. An ethics of the ordinary is thus inherent in the values and virtues of everyday practice, and must be searched for in what we do (and do not do) as well as in how we articulate and embody everyday life. In the analysis outlined below I have focused on the 1) mundane media practices of 2) individuals and/in their relations to social groups to c) maintain the values and virtues of the tempo-spatial as part of an everyday ethics.

3. Analyzing the Ethics of Space: Materials and Methods

In order to understand the values and virtues of digital media practice I have conducted semi-structured interviews and focus group interviews with 35 Swedish individuals. The two methods were combined in order to gain knowledge about both individually organized everyday practices as well as more joint dimensions of social space. Four of the interviewees were interviewed individually, two of them were interviewed together, and the remaining 29 in smaller groups (3–5 individuals in each group). Twelve of the interviewees were male and 23 were female and their ages ranged from 19–68 years. I conducted the interviews in 2015, and the interviewees were chosen in order to reach a varied sample in relation to age, gender, class, and urban versus rural lifestyles—which does however not make the material generalizable in any sense.

The interviews had an open character, but searched for detailed descriptions of the respondents' media use, with a particular focus upon the negotiations, practices and discourses concerning a 'good life'. In order not to direct or affect the interviews in relation to accepted discourses around the ethics of digital media, the interviews were structured around open questions about everyday media use; what, when and where, in order to let the respondents tell detailed stories about the devices and applications they used, how they and their technologies moved in space during the day, for what purposes, and the ways in which they organized it and reflected about it. Follow-up-questions gave great opportunities to deepen unexpected themes, such as the sensorial organization of space outlined in the analysis below. Generally, and ex-

pectedly, the individual interviews provided the best and most detailed information regarding mobility and organization of space whereas the group interviews have been more useful in revealing the discourses surrounding such practices. All interviews took 1–2.5 hours and have been fully transcribed.

4. Ethics as Sensorial Organization of Social Space

The importance of material dimensions of media use has been on the agenda since Hermann Bausinger's groundbreaking article of media and everyday life from the late 1970s (1984). This strand of research has gained interest at the outskirts of media research for a long time but has gained increased attention lately, with the emergence of portable, mobile media (cf. Pink & Leder Mackley, 2013; Richardson & Hjort, 2017). Shaun Moores has, for a long time, argued for and demonstrated how the materiality of media technologies is an essential aspect of how we use, live with, and perceive media (1993, 2012). In his work on the roles of the media in everyday life he puts forward Maurice Merleau-Ponty's bodily phenomenology, putting the embodied dimensions of media use forward as vital for our understanding of it. Moores has used this approach to particularly understand media geography, everyday space-making and feelings of 'at-home ness' (Moores, 2012). But this mundane and practice-based dimension of media use is also essential for our understanding of the values and virtues crucial in the construction of a good life. In order to understand everyday media ethics from an 'ordinary' point of view, the interviews showed we must take into account the material and embodied aspects of how we live with the media in everyday life. 'Techne' of everyday media use from the interviewees' point of view is mainly related to the material dimensions of digital media, rather than its various kinds of content, provided connections, etc. Given the small, but deep, empirical material used for the analysis, it is not meaningful to discuss levels of structuration in the material based on aspects such as gender, age, class, etc. But since the individuals interviewed were chosen to represent a broad range of people and lifestyles their everyday media use also varied greatly. It is also noticeable that even though it is not possible to make any claims about gender differences in this respect, women have articulated most of the quotes used in the analysis. We know from earlier research that moral concerns about media use are more frequently articulated by women than by men (Jensen, Schrøder, Topsøe-Jensen, & Stampe, 1993; Steiner, 1963), which explains this fact. The analytical points made here reveal an important dimension in our understanding of digital media ethics that has rarely gained academic attention before (even though the statistical significance cannot be verified). In the following I will demonstrate and discuss how the 35 interviewees construct a sensorial organization of space as part of an everyday ethics, individually as well as in relation to others.

Many interviews revealed the close relationship between digital media devices and the human body in readily observable ways. The relationship was not only discursively formulated but also bodily performed during the interviews. Using words to describe actions often turned out to be insufficient for the interviewees, or at least not the best means of communication. Many of the respondents suddenly stopped talking and turned to wordless movements in order to explain and clarify their media use, and to silently demonstrate how they interact bodily with their media technologies. Digital media today are mobile, portable, and conveniently small. They can be taken anywhere, and many of the interviewees, particularly (but not only) the younger ones, claimed to carry their devices with them always and everywhere, something experienced as problematic by several of them. The mobility and accessibility of digital technologies (particularly mobile phones, but also other devices) means that they are experienced and performed as visible and direct extensions of the human body (cf. McLuhan, 1994), and used for wordless, bodily communication.

Digital media are not only portable and mobile, but also themselves in motion: they vibrate, shake, and so forth. They are constructed to be noticeable, making little sounds and starting to move as soon as they need attention from their user. These notifications of various kinds—sound, movement, lights, etc.—thus speak to different parts of our minds and bodies. There are technological ways to handle this, such as mute functions, light dimmers, and so forth, but these specific characteristics of digital media make them difficult to ignore, especially as they are often carried around close to the body and are thus registered by several different senses. In order to live according to their values of a good life, the respondents constructed a sensorial organization of their everyday spaces, where they organized their own media practices. Here, organization means using the facilities provided by the technologies themselves to control the media devices, as well as organizing spaces in individual, and socially agreed-upon ways.

4.1. Sensorial Media in Individual and Social Space

One of the easiest, and likely most frequent, ways to organize how communication technologies give notification (often smoothly provided by the devices themselves) is to silence them. Regulating the sound of digital devices is culturally well-known and frequent, and in several public environments (such as in theatres, lecture halls, etc.), people are kindly asked by to mute their digital technologies to not disturb others or the joint activity that is going on in the room. In these cases it has to do with controlling and adjusting media technologies in order to obey the cultural frames of various kinds of social space. Similar ways of creating space for social purposes (such as intimate talks, family gatherings, romantic dinners, etc.) were also revealed in the interviews. Several discussions about the use of media technologies when among others

revolved around the presence and noticeability of media technologies, and how that affected the social situation. Earlier research has shown that talking on the phone during a dinner with your partner is considered very inappropriate by people of all ages, likely because it breaks the boundaries of the intimate space the dinner was supposed to create (Bengtsson & Johansson, 2015).

Making media technologies temporarily mute in specific situations or time frames is a much-used way to control their influence over ones attention and behavior in space. Besides regulating the sound of media technologies in relation to the specific spaces the respondents walk in and out of, media technologies may also be used to construct space for specific purposes, such as concentration, attention, and relaxation. One respondent, a female student, tells how she has removed the notifications of the social network apps on her phone in order to be able to make space for her studies. She felt a need to remove sounds and other kinds of notifications to be able to concentrate and pay her full attention to her study tasks. This does not mean she stopped using her social network applications, only that the lack of notifications from the technology made her keep control of herself, and to make space for her work. These practices have helped her control her own individual time and space, as she decides when she and her phone are in a 'study hall', or in a space for relaxation. Removing the apps and aural notifications from her phone makes that decision her own, regardless of the physical space she is in:

> I really do love my iPhone, but I try to restrict my own use a little. I have removed all notifications, apart from text messages, because I feel I need a little mindfulness. Otherwise everything just sprawls, it just points in all different directions, and then I can't focus. And it's similar with Facebook. I think of it as if I have studied hard for an exam it's okay to go in there as a reward. At that time I can revel in Facebook and afterwards I just log out again. Otherwise the screen keeps binging and I can't focus then. (Female student, 23)

The dilemma that the student is handling is not least due to the fact that digital media devices today host many different activities at the same time: they are not only used to communicate with friends and get access to information, but also for downloading and reading study material, etc. Particularly young users claim to use their media devices for a very large number of everyday tasks, from connecting, searching, gaming, watching, being entertained, etc., which then urgently calls for a new way of symbolically moving between everyday spaces. Actively avoiding notifications is put forward as a way to keep focus in life by other interviewees also. Removing entire applications that by their sheer existence call for attention is another way to make it more technologically difficult to use them, but that helps to keep the broader balance in life, something this female priest tells about:

> My wife decided to remove the Facebook app from her phone, to make it more difficult to go into Facebook. She can still log in on her phone via the Internet, but then it is a couple of more clicks. She says it helped her a lot. (Female priest, 35)

Other respondents, however, do not feel as intimately entangled with their technologies, and thus instead use the material spaces they are in to keep the media out of sensorial reach. Placing media devices somewhere where you cannot see them, out of sight, is another exercise in the search for a good life. This can be done in relation to both individual and social space. One warehouse worker in his fifties tells about how his own or others' mobile phones, even though they are muted, keep stealing attention during work meetings by turning the lights on and off, winking, etc. He and his colleagues have decided that during meetings devices are best kept in bags, pockets, or elsewhere out of sight in order not to affect the social situation. A female office clerk reveals her strategies to hide her mobile phone in her own private office space, in order to be focused at work.

> I: Do you only turn it off at night?
>
> No, I don't [turn it off] but I keep it in my purse or in my wardrobe at work, or in the pocket of my coat, or so. I'm not carrying it around or anything and it can take [a lot of time before I check it]. When I go home I always look at it and then 'oh, someone called me!'. When I'm in my office I hear when it rings, but I don't have to have it on me all the time and I don't think I need to be available 24 hours. (Female office clerk, 50)

Even though the materiality of media has always been central to how they are phenomenologically perceived, as Shaun Moores' important work has demonstrated (2012), the haptic dimensions of media devices, such as vibrating, beating, etc., are today perhaps an ever more essential characteristic of digital technologies (cf. Richardson & Hjort, 2017). Digital media keep calling for attention from their users even if they have been muted, darkened, or put away, etc. Many of the interviewees share experiences of their own and others' media technologies that start vibrating in someone's pocket and direct everyone's attention to it, in social spaces such as work situations as well as at home or elsewhere. Lina, a single mother, tells that in order to keep the family dinner media free and a space where her family members share an experience, she forces her teenagers to put their phones away from the dinner table, in a place where they can neither be seen, heard, nor physically acknowledged.

> I don't have to bring my phone to the dinner table, and if it would bring I wouldn't fly up to immediately check it [whenever something happens]. But my kids

> have theirs in their pockets or on their laps. And there are constantly friends who…I have to tell them sometimes that they don't have to answer immediately, or answer [at all]….But it is really difficult for them not to be able to have it on, very close, like this [shows, on her lap], when we eat. I think that is terrible. (Female nurse, 47)

4.2. Mobile Micro-Space: A 'Room of One's Own'

So far, an 'ordinary' media ethics has been discussed as various sensorial organizations of media technologies in individual and social space as part of the construction of everyday life. This does not only involve spatial or sensorial restrictions of the media, but rather ways to organize and use the media in order to create space that keeps parts of the world away. The multisensory character of digital media can thus be used to construct a mobile micro-universe to relieve stress, breathe, and take a break from an otherwise demanding environment. In a group discussion, some respondents discussed how they sometimes use their media devices as part of a social strategy to avoid certain kinds of interactions, such as pretending to be occupied with their technologies in order not to be addressed by strangers on the subway. But for others, media technologies really provide an alternative space that can be used as a 'room of one's own' in everyday life. Jessica, a recruiter in her forties, uses Facebook as a place to go when she needs a pause in an otherwise stressful everyday life:

> I think it is relaxing. A break from everything else. Like going in…I can do that if I'm too stressed. Breathe a little. (Female recruiter, 42)

The most noteworthy example here is a group of female priests between 30 and 50 years old, who shared their experiences of regularly using an application called 'Pray as you go'. They described the morning journey on the subway as normally very crowded, when their bodies were involuntarily pressed against (unknown) others. This unpleasant feeling of bodily proximity was handled with this application that provided them with an alternative symbolic space.

> It's just so amazing! This morning I had such an experience when people were standing like packed sardines on the green (metro) line. But this is as if you enter another room, of your own. Sometimes I have had to take my earphones out to check if anyone hears this? But, no, they don't (ha-ha)! (Female priest, 35)

4.3. The Values and Virtues of Sensorial Organization of Space

Domestication theory has shown how new technologies gradually find their space within households and family life (Silverstone, Hirsch, & Morley, 1994). Smaller, more personal, and more mobile media has made this negotiation of the role of media technologies in everyday life an increasingly individual process, but as the analysis above shows, the process also in many respects has social dimensions. As many (but not all) digital media devices today are small and personal, the way they appropriate space is through different audiovisual and haptic expressions, rather than statically, as furniture in a room. The way they fill and transform space is mainly related to sounds, lights, and movements, an aspect of them that can easily be regulated by their users, and controlled in relation to both work and leisure, meetings, as well as other socially shared spaces. Interviewees discussed how the aural, visual and haptic expressions of different digital devices often break the social bonds between individuals and groups, by directing focus from the physical environment and the social situation taking place there, and towards somewhere else. Technologies can thus be adjusted to obey the specific character of the spaces users walk into and out of, but also to transform the character of a given space and reconstruct it to adjust it to a specific purpose. The multitasking character of digital media makes these everyday strategies ever more important, particularly mentioned by the younger interviewees who claim to use their mobile phones for all different kinds of purposes; work, school work, entertainment, information, etc. This pattern of use then urgently calls for new ways of moving between the symbolic spaces of everyday life. The everyday media practices of the respondents reveal how they use their digital devices to construct and maintain space for example for concentration, attention, and control. These spaces can be constructed individually, and are sometimes mobile, but may also be used as tools to create space for different social purposes.

The most important dimension of media use in the construction of a 'good life', as revealed in the examples presented above, is that of mastering technology in order to control, and construct, space. The mutual relationship between humans and media technologies has been discussed before (cf. Turkle, 2008), but the analysis here shows how the interviewees do not only try to control their media technologies, but also use media technologies to reconstruct space and everyday life more broadly. This is done in social space as demonstrated above but also put forward as individual ways to stay focused and productive, to keep track of purposes and practices, to master technologies to maintain control of one's individual space. This individualistic approach is also visible in the construction of mobile micro-spaces, which the interviewees describe as ways to keep the surrounding world and other people out of one's personal sphere—that is, to use the media to maintain an individual space, regardless of physical movements through changing material and social spaces. The mobile and personal character of digital media, and the way they are used by the interviewees, emphasizes the creation of individual, rather than a socially organized, space, although mechanisms to ad-

just and control space in relation to social situations and other people was also brought up in the interviews.

5. Conclusion: A 'Techne' of Embodiment and Digital Media

The above analysis has focused on the influence of self-forming activities (techne) on the self of ordinary Swedish media users in mundane practices of everyday life. It has revealed the importance of the sensorial dimensions of media technologies in the interviewees' experiences and constructions of everyday space, individually as well as socially. Sensorial organization of digital media works both by liberating the senses (from unwanted stimuli) and by sensorially occupying them (thus keeping other stimuli out), which directs our attention towards the material dimensions of media technologies and a phenomenology of the body. There is a long tradition of phenomenological media studies as well as a new interest in the haptic dimensions of digital media, what Richardson and Hjort (2017) have called a need to 'orient media studies towards an awareness of the critical orientation of touch' (Richardson & Hjort, 2017, p. 1664). The analysis presented here argues for a full sensorial analysis, going beyond the limitations of touch, as *all* senses work in relationship to the world and a 'structuring of space and defining of place' (Pink, 2009, p. 16; Rodaway, 1994, p. 4).

Such practice-based phenomenology would start from a broad notion of sensoriality and embodiment, grounded in the everyday experiences of ordinary media users, and would pay tribute to the existentialist phenomenology of Maurice Merleau-Ponty and his acknowledgement of the body and sensations as the main subject of perception (Hockey & Allen-Collinson, 2009; Merleau-Ponty, 1962). Merleau-Ponty notes that things are not merely neutral objects, but that the way people relate to the world has to do with how objects provoke certain reactions (Merleau-Ponty, 2004, p. 61). I agree with Rodaway's (1994) call to take the sensorial experiences of 'the other' (here: the media user) into account in our analysis of the ethics of space (see also Moores, 2012).

The ethically organized media practices of the interviewees (techne) discussed above show 1) how media users not only perceive the world through the sensorial aspects of digital technologies, but also 2) how they use the technological facilities of digital media to actively (by activating or restricting certain sensorial dimensions) construct space in particular everyday situations. This way of using media is of course not new, and we know from earlier research that analogue media have also been used for such purposes (Bengtsson, 2006). Mobile and personal digital media devices are however more individualized, not least as we can use them to construct a mobile micro-space that we bring with us when moving through material space. This thus means that even though all media are in some way social and community oriented, they may at the same time be used to severely individualize the spaces in which we dwell in everyday life.

The sensorial organization of space that the interviews reveal also emphasizes the importance of acknowledging the material and bodily dimensions of *media ethics*, and the ways these are carried out in the mundane practices of everyday life. To fully understand how people maintain a good life in a digital culture, we must include not only touch but also a broader spectrum of sensorial experiences and constructions of space and time. Doing so means broadening what Max van Manen (2016) has called an ethical phenomenology (p. 113) by combining it with sensory dimensions.

The approach to media ethics presented here is of course highly cultural and Howes and Classen have pointed out that senses are organized hierarchically in all cultures, and that the sensory 'profile' or 'order' of culture varies in time and space (Howes & Classen, 1991, p. 257; Pink, 2009, p. 12). We must therefore be open for synchronic variations and diachronic transformations in this area, along with the technological development of digital media.

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Conflict of Interests

The author declares no conflict of interests.

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Article

‘It’s Something Posh People Do’: Digital Distinction in Young People’s Cross-Media News Engagement

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Abstract
In this article, I analyse digital distinction mechanisms in young people’s cross media engagement with news. Using a combination of open online diaries and qualitative interviews with young Danes aged 15 to 18 who differ in social background and education, and with Bourdieu’s field theory as an analytical framework, the article investigates how cultural capital (CC) operates in specific tastes and distastes for news genres, platforms and providers. The article argues that distinction mechanism not only works on the level of news providers and news genres but also on the level of engagement practices—the ways in which people enact and describe their own news engagement practices. Among those rich in CC, physical, analogue objects in the form of newspapers and physical conversations about news are seen as ‘better’ that digital ones, resulting in a feeling of guilt when they mostly engage with news on social media. Secondly, young people with lower CC discard legacy news, which they see as elitist and irrelevant. Thirdly, those rich in CC are media and news genre savvy in the sense that it makes them able to critically evaluate the news they engage with across platforms and sites.

Keywords
engagement; diaries, distinction, field theory; media; news; social media intermediaries; young people

Issue
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1. Introduction

> I watch *Monte Carlo*. Or in fact, I don’t watch it to keep track of what is going on, I watch it because it’s funny. Sometimes I wish, I knew more about what’s going on in society. If you follow politics, you seem clever. It’s like it’s prestigious to be engaged in society. But that’s so ironic, since we are many who thinks that the politicians are just a bunch of idiots.

This young boy of 17 years describes his daily routines of using various media and news during a normal day in his life in an interview carried out at the boy’s school in the spring of 2015. The talk show *Monte Carlo* is a Danish satirical television show that comments on the everyday news agenda, with two young hosts making funny comments about things politicians have said, (political) decisions made and popular news stories in general, which they spin into satirical jokes.

The programme in itself, which started as a radio programme on a public service channel dedicated to popular music primarily, would not, in any surveys of this boy’s news consumption patterns, be categorised as news. Nevertheless, this hybrid form of news is a source of information for this boy on what has been characterised by Elisabeth Bird as ‘every day news talk’ (Bird, 2011, p. 489). Sometimes he watches the show with friends, sometimes alone, but during the period in which the interviews were carried out, it was nearly always the topic of conversation the next morning in school or on Messenger during the show. If something was exceptionally funny, the boy would even share it on his Facebook wall or Snapchat it to friends, although he generally avoided sharing anything on Facebook, especially news: ‘I don’t really follow news’, he said to me in an almost proud voice. ‘It’s something posh people do, and I feel like doing the opposite’.

Studies show that this Danish boy is not alone. Young people are found to be generally less active in seeking in-

formation about what happens in society than older generations (Casero-Ripolls, 2012; Kohut, 2013; Newman, Fletcher, Kalogeropoulos, Levy, & Kleis Nielsen, 2017). Research from several countries has shown that young people are less interested in news and less informed than their counterparts in earlier decades (Buckingham, 1999) and that the marginal significance of news and current affairs programmes in the life of young people indicates a rather limited social involvement (Horowitz & Mindich, 2007). Concerned voices fear that the overall decreased interest in news is resulting in a decline in 'informed citizenship', (Buckingham, 2000, p. 2) and fragmentation of audiences (Tewksbury, 2005; Trilling & Schoenbach, 2013). Other studies find, however, that frequent social media use among young citizens can function as a leveller in terms of motivating political participation (Holt, Shehata, Strömbäck, & Ljungberg, 2013).

Irene Costera Meijer (2007) points to the fact that many of these empirical findings rely on self-reporting and that young people might get political information from many other places than traditional news (Costera Meijer, 2007, p. 4). Like Barnhurst and Wartella (1998), she supports the conclusion that young people experience news as just one genre out of many in the never-ending flow of television images. Moreover, they do not draw a strict line between entertainment and information, and to develop their political awareness they rely on a much broader set of programs and media than just news in the classical sense. Young people's relationship with the news seems, Costera Meijer argues, to be paradoxical, in that they like to follow the news, as they feel it is something they ought to do, but they also find themselves tuning into more entertaining forms of watching news than the traditional news on television. However, they do not want these traditional news programmes to become more entertaining, as the news then seem less credible or even fake (Costera Meijer, 2007, p. 13). In Sweden, Malin Sveningsson finds a discrepancy between the young people's reported news consumption, when compared with their media diaries and the way in which they talked about news in social media, suggesting that they do not see the news they receive through social media as real news (Sveningsson, 2015). Quantitative surveys of people's news consumption patterns might then underestimate the importance of social media and other more popular genres of news, such as talk shows, for the level of news consumption among young people. What Sveningsson also finds are some interesting differences between how the young participants talk about news, but the differences are not analysed per se, and, thus, we are left with the question of why and how these differences occur and how they matter.

Research has shown links between class and news orientation; for example, socialisation into news consumption seems to be strong in homes with higher educated parents who regularly consume news and discuss these with their children (York & Scholl, 2015). A recent Swedish study, not limited to young people, shows that those rich in cultural capital (CC) are more inclined to consume 'quality' news and neglect 'popular' news (Ohlsson, Lindell, & Arkhede, 2017). News consumption seems indeed stratified across different socio-cultural groups in society. This goes for both motivation, skills and ability to consume news (Blekesaune, Elvestad, & Aalberg, 2012; Holt et al., 2013; Ksiazek, Malthouse, & Webster, 2010; Strömbäck, Djerf-Pierre, & Shehata, 2013); and even though interest in both news and politics tend to increase with age (Hill & Gauntlett, 1999), there is a need to further investigate the normative motives and reasons for engaging with news in a digital age as this interest or disinterest develops. Furthermore, it seems meaningful to investigate not just young people as one group, but also the differences between them, as these differences are likely to continue into their adult lives, providing a more sociological explanation to the well-established knowledge on news avoiders and news seekers and the possible consequences for democratic citizenship (e.g., Ksiazek et al., 2010; Lee & Yang, 2014; Strömbäck et al., 2013).

This article takes a sociological approach and investigates how young people might be unequally equipped to manoeuver in the legitimate news culture of the social space they inhabit. Like previous studies of distinction in news consumption (Hovden & Moe, 2017; Lindell & Hovden, 2016; Lindell & Sartoretto, 2017; Ohlsson et al., 2017), I draw upon the cultural sociology of Bourdieu and conceptualise news engagement practices and preferences as part of broader, potentially classified, tastes and lifestyles that serve the function of legitimating social differences (Bourdieu, 1984).

This article contributes, in a qualitative way, to this line of research, but it argues for a need to shift focus to also include distinction practices—*the attitudes and values to the ways we engage with news*, in the analysis of fragmented and dispersed news consumption patterns. This has been done within studies of consumption and appreciation of art (Holt, 1997), but this study shows similar mechanisms of difference in current news engagement practices, not just between news outlets and genres, but also between technological devices and platforms and *the ways of describing* the use of these for engagement with news on various platforms and devices. Hence, the article is a step on the way of updating field theory, paving the way for further analysis of emerging forms of capital in a high choice digital news media environment.

2. News and Media Engagement as Distinction

Pierre Bourdieu's analysis of media consumption, which is generally seen as part of the larger field of cultural consumption, can be found in mainly *Distinction* (1984) and *The Field of Cultural Production* (1993). But in several of his works, the workings of the media are integrated into his overall analysis of the structural factors that influences everything from choice of films to what news-

paper we subscribe to and how the middle class pose on a photograph (Bourdieu, 1993, 1998, 1990a).

The young people's digital news practices and preferences are understood in this study as part of their lifestyles and analysed with their habitus as foundation. The habitus is created by an individual's social background, education and experiences, an embodiment of the persons' cultural capital. CC and habitus are expressed by acts of distinction: ways to communicate and create one's identity by showing taste or distaste for cultural practices and artefacts. In a field theory, perspective, media and news practices must be related to our position in the social space, on the same time stratifying and affecting that exact position in the social space, the habitus. It is a cluster of continuous, but still changeable, dispositions (Bourdieu, 1990b, p. 53), which functions simultaneously as a system of power relations and as a symbolic system in which *distinctions of taste* become the basis for social re-production (Bourdieu, 1984). Bourdieu described the mechanisms behind these practices in this well-known quote:

> Taste classifies, and it classifies the classifier. Social subjects, classified by their classifications, distinguish themselves by the distinctions they make, between the beautiful and the ugly, the distinguished and the vulgar, in which their position in the objective classifications is expressed or betrayed. (Bourdieu, 1984, p. 6)

Digital distinctions, then, are acts of distinction, taste and distaste in an increasingly digital sphere of cultural consumption. As such, we never just (rationally) choose from the number of media made available for us then, as suggested by uses and gratification approaches (Katz, Blumler, & Gurevitch, 1973; LaRose & Eastin, 2004) or studies of media repertoires (Hasebrink & Popp, 2006; Kim, 2014). Elsewhere, digital distinction has been studied as the choices made by similar university students in terms of socio-economic status between different websites, relating them to other (also offline) cultural practices (Bengtsson, 2015). It has also been studied in the context of how internet use is related to democratic behaviours and engagement, and how different groups with diverse economic and CC use and navigate digital media and the possible democratic consequences hereof, often referred to as the 'digital divide' (Gripsrud, Hovden, & Moe, 2011; Hargittai, 2010; Hollingworth, Mansaray, Allen, & Rose, 2011; Kalmus, Realo, & Siibak, 2011; Meyen, Pfaff-Rüdiger, Dudenhöffer, & Huss, 2010; Robinson, 2009; Zillien & Hargittai, 2009). What this body of literature tells us is that CC matters when manoeuvring the digital sphere, but this cultural approach has only very recently been applied to the study of people's distinctions and classifying practices when engaging with news. In a recent qualitative study of young people in Sweden and Brazil, Lindell and Sartoretto found that different social groups monopolise completely different news practices and that these are highly socialised via home and school experiences with news (Lindell & Sartoretto, 2017, p. 1). Other studies of distinction in the field of news have shown how CC endangers patterns of taste and distaste for different online news providers (Ohlsson et al., 2017) and how that even in a high-choice environment, media choices and practices become included in the repertoires that work to legitimate social differences (Lindell & Hovden, 2017).

As this study is a qualitative one, I seek to understand the role of inherited CC, as the news engagement practices are in the process of being formed. The qualitative approach also enables me to contrast the inherited CC with how the young people evaluate and value their own news and media practices, which indicates the legitimate and illegitimate ways of engaging with news in different social settings.

On the basis of two larger empirical studies of cultural tastes in Britain and Denmark, Prieur and Savage show that although taste for classical high culture might be in decline, this does not mean that class differences in cultural orientations have declined (Prieur & Savage, 2013, p. 249). However, they have changed. They suggest that:

> In such processes some social agents will be ahead of changes, having developed effective reproduction strategies, while others will stick to evaluation schemes that once gave themselves or ancestors their privileges but today are in the course of becoming obsolete. (Prieur & Savage, 2013, p. 254)

They dispute the theories of the omnivore raised by several studies, the argument that people today can embrace both high- and low-brow genres, as a dispute of these forms of distinction processes (Bennett, Savage, Silva, Warde, Gayo-Cal, & Wright, 2008; Chan & Goldthorpe, 2005). Prieur and Savage suggest the term of 'knowing' as a form of *emerging* cosmopolitan form of CC to capture the subtle differences in the capacity to range over cultural forms in an ultimately discriminating way (Prieur & Savage, 2013, p. 256). In line with Holt (1997), they argue that the changes may imply a displacement of how distinction is achieved, with less emphasis on the choices of particular cultural objects (such as newspapers or certain media brands) and more on the way to relate to these objects. Theoretically, this article aims to contribute to this line of research focussing on 'knowing' the news in a digital high-choice environment and, hence, open non-media-centric (Morley, 2009) diaries in combination with qualitative interviews proved a valuable methodological path.

3. The Methodological Framework

The project was situated around Copenhagen, but it also included participants living and going to school in the suburbs and the countryside a few hours from the city.

To reach people from varying backgrounds, four schools were selected: two colleges with a focus on students continuing to university, a production school for dropouts from the regular secondary schools, leading to craft internships and a boarding school for students age 15 to 16 who have not yet made their choice of further education.

The methodology chosen was open ended diary-writing, which took place over a period of 8 weeks in May and April 2015 and in which a total of 36 of the young people from different social backgrounds participated. There was a dropout, and thus a total of 21 completed the period of writing the diaries. Of these, 15 were female and 6 were male. During the diary period, the participants were asked to stay off media for one week and reflect on this before and after.

For this study, a website on a closed university server was created through which the participants could access their online diaries. The diaries were closed to the public and could only be read by the participants individually and me. The purpose of placing the diaries online was to make the diary writing process as convenient as possible for the participants and to expand the possibilities related to writing the diary (e.g., to add hyperlinks, upload pictures and sound or change the visual appearance of the diary).

Some participants uploaded only once a week, and some uploaded up to 24 times during the period of 8 weeks. The purpose of this unstructured approach was non-media centric (Morley, 2009), and the advantage is that it enables the researcher to catch and investigate spontaneous news engagement as it is entwined with the consumption of other media content and the differences in these practices. Coleman (2006) argues that news for people seem to be related to a very specific form, and it seems that even the very definition of news is at stake here. Thus, a non-media centric methodological framework means that the study does not operate with a definition of news as a specific genre with some certain attributes and normative expectations attached to it, but rather an emic and audience centred understanding of news and media could emerge in the context of other cultural practices and everyday life of young people. Sveningsson notes that diaries also reveal news consumption patterns that the participants either forget or do not see as news consumption, for example, checking the phone or watching news with their parents (Sveningsson, 2015).

To achieve a group of participants with varying amounts of CC, all participants answered a survey before entering the diary project. As a consequence of their young age, CC was operationalised as their socio-cultural background, for example, parent's occupations and incomes, cultural consumption habits in their parents' homes and the participant's choices of education (Bourdieu, 1984).

The participants are of course not representative of all young Danish people. According to their own estimations in the survey, their news consumption was similar to the average Danish person aged 12- to 18-years-old (Slots- og Kulturstyrelsen, 2017). They are neither non-users or extremely high users of news and they were all, apart from one participant, inherently cross-media (Schrøder, 2011). None were members of political organizations.

For the purpose of this article, where space is limited, I distinguish between HCC (high cultural capital) and LCC (low cultural capital) participants, as done by Holt (1997), who argues for several dimensions of 'knowing' and positioning strategies varying according to CC. Naturally questions of class cannot be reduced to low and high CC, as the social field is much more multi-faceted. In the material presented here there are also lots 'in between', and some participants seem richer in CC than others in the same group. However, there is an urgent need to investigate how CC seems to be transforming, as the number of choices is expanding, and hence how new forms of CC might be emerging in this context. What is cool one day might be outdated the next, and what is outdated, becomes kitsch. If it is appropriated and consumed in the right way. In order to catch and explore these subtle differences, it has been useful to contrast the forms of engagement by dividing the participants into HCC and LCC. The analytical points about how CC matters for the ways taste and distaste is enacted cannot be generalised to all young people but can provide a starting point for such an analysis of dimensions of taste within a certain social field of media- and news consumption, in this case, the Danish social field, of which the young diarists are a part.

4. Analysis

4.1. News at Home and in Schools

Not surprisingly, and also confirming what we know from earlier studies (Costera Meijer, 2007; Newman et al., 2017; Sveningsson, 2015) the analysis show how social media, and especially Facebook, is the dominant media platform (mentioned several times in each of the diary entries) from which they access and engage with news. The interviews and diaries showed, similar to Sveningsson's study (2015), that the immediate network matters in terms of how young people access news, but for participants in this study, these networks would also be of a global character. For all participants, friends from abroad played a significant role, even people that they had never met outside the digital realm.

> I spent a lot of my time on YouTube. All my news and information I get from there. I'm very interested in physics, so I spent a lot of time watching documentaries. Reddit is my second most used source of news. We have a community here, where we share everything and discuss with other people. You can mention any subject, and there will be a Reddit forum for it.

Participants rich in CC were also introduced to news in schools, this was particularly the case for the boarding

school students. They would start off every morning with an assembly with all the students discussing the news agenda of the day—news that they would later follow up on or work with in the class discussions:

> One of the teacher's cats were run over today. And it completely took over what we talked about all day. None of the other news stories we heard about this morning at the assembly made the same impression. We heard about the policeman, who was not charged in Ferguson, we heard about Lykketoft [a politician, ed.] going to the UN. And about the file from Venstre [Government party, ed.] on how to spin the opposition. Especially the thing with Lykketoft surprised me, and I was so interested that I went to DR's app to read about it.

Also, they had a course called 'Global', where the teachers recommended using news in assignments and often moulded the class sessions according to what had been in the newspapers of the day. What is significant here is that the news the students get exposed to as 'news' were mostly political and concerned with national and global issues, asserting these as the legitimate form of news. For HCC participants, similar processes could be observed when they were at home with their parents.

Sveningsson (2015) notes how watching the news seems to be a way of spending time with parents, and this was also the case for the young people in this study, but differences between the LCC and HCC participants emerged. While the HCC participants specifically discuss some of these stories with their parents and enjoy this, the LCC participants did not in the same way see news as a bond between themselves and their parents. HCC participants also mentioned how their parents frequently read a subscription newspaper at the breakfast table and how they sit down and read some of the stories recommended by their parents. When asked directly about media in their homes, LCC mentioned noticing the free local newspaper in the pile of ads at home in their mum's house, or how the radio or a television is turned on in the kitchen in the morning. If they discussed media content with family, it would usually be television game shows, such as (Danish versions of) Big Bakeoff or X-factor, or sports, as also seen in the study by Lindell and Sartoretto (2017). In school, even though some of the LCC participants had a course in media, it was not focussed around news. Instead, it focussed around producing a glossy magazine with ads and satire, or the production of an ad for television. One girl was particularly occupied in her diary with her role as a reporter for X-factor for a self-made YouTube channel. Another wrote about her blog, reviewing makeup and hair products, which—despite quite a lot of followers—was a secret to both her friends, family and her boyfriend.

This confirms the results of Lindell and Sartoretto (2017), who argue that attitudes to seeking news and keeping informed, as well as values related to news consumption and its relevance, are more likely to be passed on and reproduced as habitus, resulting in vastly different starting points for forming news practices (Lindell & Sartoretto, 2017, p. 10).

4.2. Individualisation of the News Engagement

In a field theoretical framework, distinctive acts are those acts that strive to express difference towards that which is regarded as easy, common or mainstream (Bourdieu, 1984, p. 176). With almost every single member of the Danish population on Facebook, it is likely to be considered both easy and mainstream. Moreover, when something is enjoyed by the many, it is often rejected by the elite or those rich in CC. 'I was so much more creative when not using FB. But I need to connect', as one HCC diarist put it after a week of being off all media. In the case of this study, HCC participants seemed to camouflage their excessive use of Facebook and distinguish themselves in other ways than abandoning the platform, since it is apparently 'too difficult' socially for them not to be on Facebook, mostly because of Messenger. Instead, HCC moulded their Facebook practices to differentiate themselves, for example, by not sharing news and personal information, sharing things that are widely shared, commenting, liking and distancing themselves from those who debate and share, for example, their parents. The following HCC participant expresses this in her diary after remarking how she had spent the evening reading a novel.

> And what is BJ doing [her mother, ed.]. with her 43 years of age this evening? Indeed, she is on Facebook, sharing pictures of the ugly cat in the window. And what is KP [father, ed.], 42, doing? He is also on Facebook commenting on some half-racist-unreadable-full-of-mistakes-completely-unnecessary comments on the Facebook-page of some ridiculous politician. And then they say that I (!) spend too much time on Facebook. That I do not spend my time sensibly. Society is complaining that I do not spend enough time debating, that I am not active enough. But who can blame me for not taking part in this boring debate on Facebook. As if I want to waste my time on that.

The quote illustrates, of course, a generational gap between the girl and her parents, but in the material, these same distinctions were found among HCC participants towards other peers who share or debate what these HCC-young discard as irrelevant news. One girl, for example, was annoyed with one of the classmates who shared news about horses, and another boy was ranting in the interview about a girl his age sharing news stories about depression, 'just because she has a depression herself'.

LCC, however, reflect on the practicality of accessing a wide range of news, which is free and useful for them in their own lives. They talk positively about how their feed provides them with a fast overview of the news and

how they see things that they would not otherwise have access to. They sometimes follow online debates with curiosity, but do not participate, not because they feel it's a waste of time like the HCC participants, but they don't feel they have anything to contribute with.

Despite the intense use of digital sources of news, HCC participants favour analogue objects of news consumption such as television (most often Public Service) and legacy newspapers, but also the physical presence and connections as well as physical talk about news and politics were seen as 'better' than—and preferred to—digital alternatives. Engaging with news on Facebook is described as 'waste of time', 'easy', 'a necessary overview', 'superficial', and even at times 'fake'. This indicates the superiority and legitimacy of other news platforms over social media platforms and that practices of using the same mass-distributor of news as Facebook is, are valued differently depending on the CC of the agents.

Amongst HCC participants, there was an urge to be or feel *updated*, which was described in positive terms when they could live up to it, and as frustration when they were less updated than they felt they had to be, as was often the case. Thus, being offline for a week came as a relief, since it gave them an excuse to be out of the loop, and they described it as 'interesting' and 'enlightening':

> It was kind of nice to be without media, because normally you have to be updated on the news and stuff.

In the Swedish qualitative study (Sveningsson, 2015), we likewise saw how Twitter was considered a good source of news, because it could keep them updated constantly, but the LCC participants in the present study did not feel the same need to be updated, at least not on political news or human-interest news. Also, none of them were on Twitter, while Twitter was popular among those rich in CC.

In contrast, LCC participants saw the offline week as hard, impossible and odd. Many of them quit after just one day and some participants cheated. This also indicates that the negative judgements around Facebook by HCC participants made them more able to switch off, as it seems to conform with their norms. When these ideals of 'switching off' are not present or even resisted and contradicted by LCC participants, the attempt to stay offline became much more than just difficult. It became silly and pointless for them.

The participants seemed to understand news as the classical genre of quality news. As a consequence of this, LCC participants often did not see themselves as 'following the news', and although my material is too small to generalise, it seems to be especially the young men who distance themselves from news. At the same time, the diaries show how they regularly engage with news via game forums or sites like Reddit, or they follow sports (news). It seems that sometimes more popular news does not even qualify as news in their reflections and what they show distaste for is political news and genres more associated with quality news vis-à-vis more popular news genres. The differences between men and women can also be seen in Ohlsson et al.'s study, where women were more likely to consume quality newspapers, and men more likely to go for popular online news (Ohlsson et al., 2017). Another quantitative study from Sweden concludes that women tend to be richer than men in CC while men tend to be richer in economic capital (Lindell & Hovden, 2017, p. 8). More research is needed, however, to investigate what is perceived as 'quality' and 'news' by various audiences themselves.

4.3. Cosmopolitan vs. Local News Engagement

The reasons for engaging with news given by LCC participants were much more about their social life ('talking to other people'), entertainment and duty ('I feel, I should'), and the occasional engagement with news on various (mostly online) platforms is described as 'fun', 'cosy' (*hygge*)[1] and as 'wasted time in between doing other things', similar to Sveningsson's study, where participants also described news consumption as a 'pastime' (Sveningsson, 2015). LCC participants emphasised news consumption on social intermediaries for practical reasons, like seeking news that is immediately usable in their own lives, such as a story of a man being attacked in the local neighbourhood or news stories on television shows they follow.

In contrast to this, HCC participants engage with news because of actual, or at least expressed, interest in news and politics and society around them. News on homosexuality in Uganda or the Ferguson trial in the US, among other things, are reflected upon in the diaries, which they then relate to themselves coming out as homosexual or racism in Denmark. The HCC participants display a sort of cosmopolitan outlook; in the diaries they write about how media tells them all the things they ought to do, for example, how the news they engage with tells them to not to waste food, to protect the planet, to obtain an education and not to be lazy. HCC participants reflect on how they feel enormously privileged and, at the same time, extremely obliged to act and worry.

> I have access to all the information I could want, via internet, books, newspapers, television, radio and so on. I feel safe, I'm happy, I'm healthy, in short, I'm privileged. And yet in some way I feel an obligation. First and foremost to do something about this enormous inequality in the world, which means that I have this fantastic privileged life, while others suffer and cannot cover the most basic needs.

Instagram, Tumblr and Snapchat tell them how to look, what to eat, how to have fun and have an otherwise

[1] The translation of the Danish word '*hygge*' is often 'cosy', but it has a broader meaning of doing something social, often involving other people, something casual as supposed to serious and important.

'perfect' life, which they were annoyed about and made them wish to leave social media and news on these platforms behind. This is similar to what we saw with Facebook.

Among some of the LCC participants, news avoidance was sometimes a deliberate and even antagonistic strategy, like, for instance, the diarist who proclaimed that news 'is something posh people do, and I feel like doing the opposite', as we saw in the opening vignette. The quote illustrates that consuming news in the classical understanding of news is associated with being 'posh' and this young boy deliberately and very consciously decides not to bother with that. LCC participants in this study have a disinterest in what they term the 'serious' news, which they describe as 'hard to follow' and 'irrelevant', or they describe how the content of the news does not really concern them.

> I'm not a sort of…media-person or news-seeking in any way. I live in my own little world. I don't need it, so I don't even watch television. It's mostly Facebook that occupies me.

The LCC participants especially seemed to discard news on national politics and did not feel the same urge to keep up and, therefore, no bad conscience for not doing so. Choosing not to follow news is also a distinctive mechanism, separating them from all of those who find it important to keep up with the news. But, at the same time, the distinctive mechanism confirms the cultural and social hierarchy. This is similar to what was found in the study of Lindell and Sartoretto (2017), who emphasise that the social position matters to the extent to 'which young people "buy into" the normative order that regards news as inherently 'good', valuable and worthwhile' (p. 17).

As Lindell & Sartoretto (2017) also note, this resistance by participants poor in CC reify their position as subalterns in the social space. When they 'refuse what they are refused' they exclude themselves from the legitimate and dominant culture (Bourdieu, 1984, p. 471). According to Bourdieu, it is common that those with lesser CC resources are dismissive of, or antagonistic towards, the objects and practices of those with greater CC resources (p. 471). Bourdieu argues that CC secures the respect and esteem of others through the consumption of objects that are 'difficult' and so can only be consumed by those few who have acquired the ability to do so (p. 471).

Distinction mechanisms were also visible when the participants referred to sites they follow on social media. Where LCC like to follow pages that give them a broad, free and fast overview of the news, HCC participants talked positively about providers with more specific profiles, which suit their personal interests. A site like *Dagens.dk* (online only newspaper) and often local online sites are mentioned by LCC participants who discarded *Politiken* (a left-liberal daily) and other big subscription dailies. Again, the material is too small to generalise between global versus local links to CC, but in Lindell and Sartoretto's study, they also found an interest for local news among working-class young people in Sweden (2017). But as Sveningsson (2015) also notes, just because people declare that they do not follow news, it may just mean that they follow and engage with news that is not socially regarded and accepted as 'news', even by the LCC participants themselves.

4.4. Referential vs. Critical News Engagement

Interesting differences are also visible in the evaluations of the various sources of news. Amongst HCC participants we see, for example, that they specifically and much more so than LCC participants wish they could supplement the news the get on Facebook with other sources of news. However, newspapers and evening news, especially the public broadcaster DR, are described in positive terms; 'something you can trust', 'not the bullshit you get on FB' or like this comment on news via FB as an intermediary platform for news: 'it's much more reflecting to read an article than to just flick through headlines. It updates me, but I don't feel informed'. Hence, the negative distinctions reflected in the HCC young people's evaluations of Facebook as a platform filters down into their evaluations of Facebook as a platform for news engagement, and oppositions in the evaluations appear (updated/informed, trustworthy/crappy, in-depth/superficial). They show an awareness of the different profiles of the various news providers and what sources and news providers are legitimate in terms of trust and which ones they need to check by going to the original source.

> I get most of my news from Tumblr, which most people might say is not a trustworthy source of information. But I always check where it comes from.

Interestingly, often the LCC participants found it hard to describe what sort of news outlets they accessed during the day and what forms of media devices they have in their homes. In many cases, they would not know if their parents kept a newspaper other than local, free commercial weeklies. Some of them would interchangeably describe *TV2 news* (the commercial public service station news channel) as *TV-Avisen* (the Danish public broadcaster), and while they followed a number of different news providers, they showed an indifference to who and what their news came from. 'It's all the same anyway', as one girl explained. In contrast to this, the HCC participants evaluated the news on a regular basis, showed extreme care as to what news stories to like or dislike in the Facebook feeds, if they ever liked any, and some of the HCC participants even deliberately liked certain news items that they would not normally do in order to 'cheat the Facebook algorithm', so it would not give them too many of the same types of news stories. On

Tumblr and Instagram, they thought it was important to follow a diverse number of people; this showed an awareness of the fear of echo chambers or living in filter bubbles (Flaxman & Rao, 2016; Pariser, 2011), whereas LCC participants did not in the same way find this important. Instead, they explained what they followed in terms of interests, sports, celebrities or fashion or other personal interests, such as gaming. As one LCC participant said, 'I just follow what inspires me'.

Almost all the participants follow a number of famous people, musicians, movie stars and blogger celebrities, but the HCC participants react strongly against their own practices in their diaries. Like we saw with their Facebook use, they feel guilty about it.

> Following many famous people makes me very conscious about what I wear and how I look, and that annoys me.

The distaste for popular news by people rich in CC has been observed in previous studies (Lindell & Sartoretto, 2017; Ohlsson et al., 2017) and can be observed at the level of which sites or people they follow, what they like and share on social media and how this is done. What is significant here is that the HCC participants in this study discard their own practices, which underlines the importance of analysing not just the actual news consumption and the selection between different platforms, but also *the ways in which* these practices are enacted.

5. Concluding Remarks

Different ideals and norms about news engagement appear in the empirical material from online open diaries and qualitative interviews with 21 young Danish persons between the ages of 15 and 18 in terms of how they evaluate their own news engagement practices. On the basis of this large in-depth qualitative material, this article has shown how Facebook and other social media intermediaries, as sources of news access, are connected to feelings of guilt, shame and resentment by those rich in CC. They have the means, privilege and acquired position to select from a variety of other news sources, and the analogue sources of news are generally regarded as 'better' than their digital alternatives. Young people rich in CC have an urge to feel updated and informed; a normative framework, which is introduced to them (and reinforced) in schools and in their homes. A position of HCC seems to make them seek news on human-interest issues, often with a national and global outlook. LCC participants seem to have a more materialistic and less symbolic use of news platforms and various sites, and, on a more general level, discard the need to stay updated and be informed, thus, refusing 'what they are refused' (Bourdieu, 1984, p. 471). They also have a more referential evaluation of their news engagement practices, where they find reasons for engaging with news if it is immediately useful and relevant in their own lives, which results in an often quite strong distaste for political news on a global or national scale, as if it is 'just not for them'. News avoidance and news seeking has been established in earlier research, but this article contributes to a nuanced understanding of these mechanisms, which indicates that we need to go further in depth with people's motivations and reasons for engaging or disengaging. This article has done exactly that, and how these young people that are richer and poorer in CC differ in their evaluations of news in a digital sphere has been analytically conceptionalised in this article as *digital distinction practices*.

More research is needed to investigate not only how people's positions in social fields influence the choices they make but also how people enact those choices, the distaste and taste for certain ways of engaging with news and what new and emerging forms of capital we can observe in a digital high-choice media environment, where previous variables traditionally associated as high and low in the field of cultural consumption seems to be in decline (Prieur & Savage, 2013). As the concept of cultural capital is gaining prominence, also in studies of media audiences, it is important to warn against a fixed understanding of the concept. Some survey responses (such as *a priori* liking for specific media products or brands which are then associated with highbrow or lowbrow tastes) run the risk of removing the relational nature of the concept. This article has taken a subtler approach in order to show that a widespread use of, for example, a certain platform such as Facebook for news, seem to transform how people enact their taste in news as a genre. This article also supports evidence that anti-elite currents in Scandinavian countries do not inhibit symbolic dominance of some news engagement practices over others. As suggested by Prieur and Savage (2013), *knowing* the different classifications, in this article termed 'critical news engagement', can be seen as a way of dominating certain practices in a discriminating way. As such it might not be the objects of news consumption, but the ways that these objects are rejected which marks them as exclusive. More research is needed to further explore the various and emerging forms of CC and class differences in digital news engagement practices coincide with specific positions in the social space and how they—in effect—reinforce the structure of this space.

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